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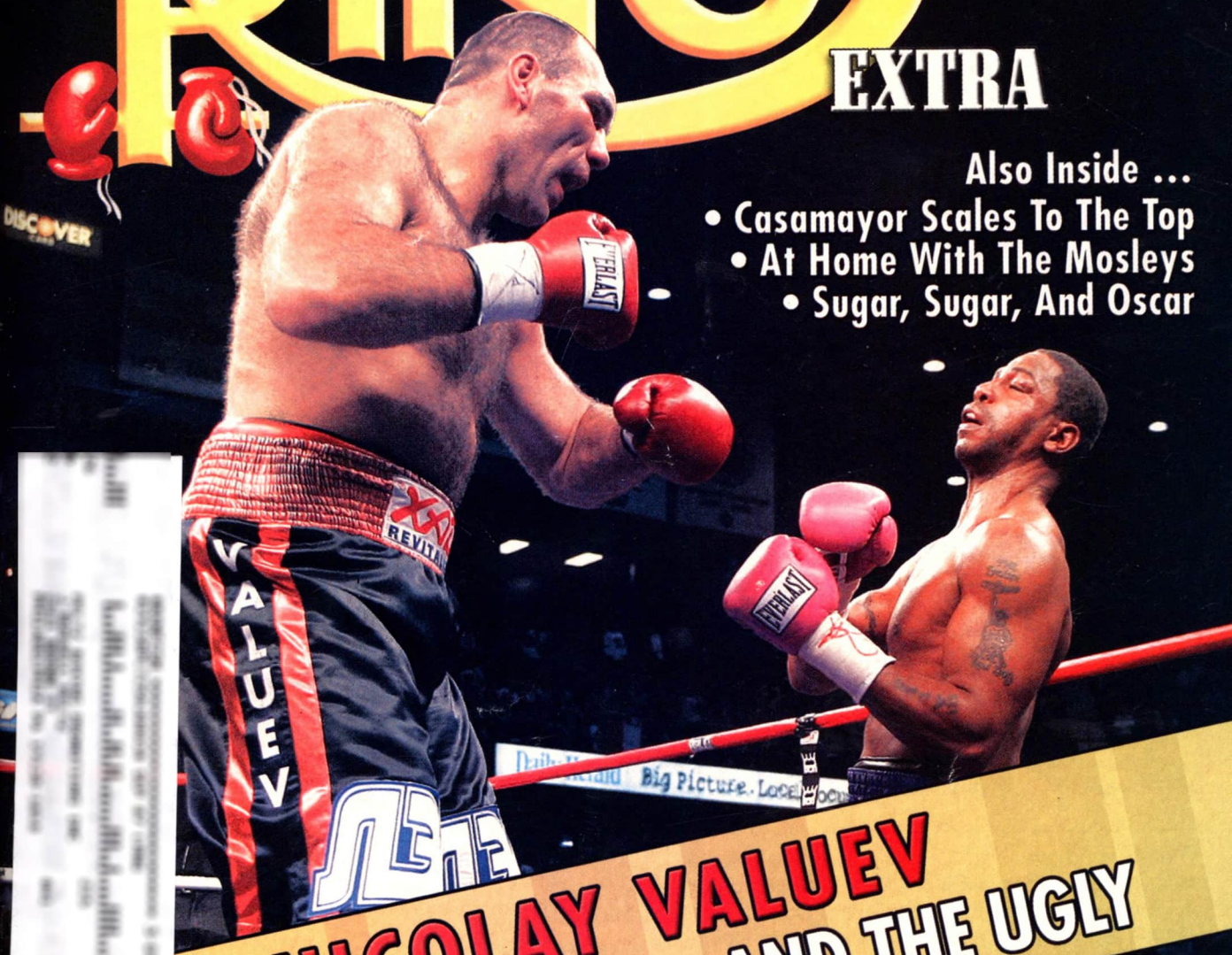

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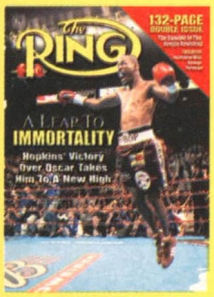
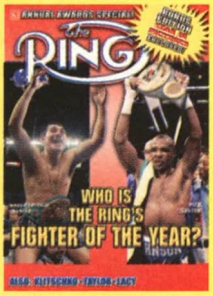


Vol. II, 2004: Cover Story: A Leap To Immortality: Hopkins' Victory Over Oscar Takes Him To A New High. **Magazine Within A Magazine:** 30 Years Later: The Rumble In The Jungle Revisited. **Also Inside:** Andre Ward, Erik Morales, Fernando Vargas, Shane Mosley, Pete Ranzany.



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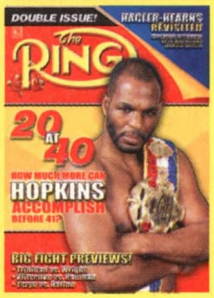

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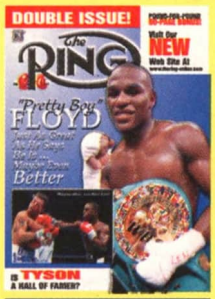

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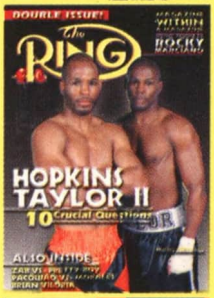

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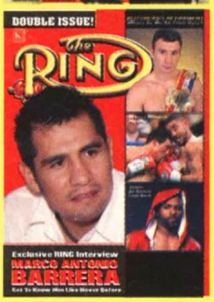

March 2006: Cover Story: Exclusive *Ring* Interview: Marco Antonio Barrera. **Special Bonus Section:** The 10 Fights We'd Like To See. **Also Inside:** Vitali Klitschko, *The Contender,* Roy Jones, Pongsaklek Wonjongkam, Nigel Benn.

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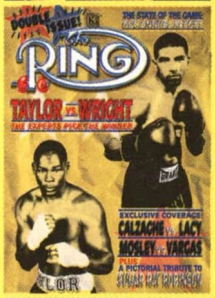

July 2006: Cover Story: Taylor vs. Wright: The Experts Pick The Winner. **Special Bonus Section:** The State of the Game. **Also Inside:** Joe Calzaghe, Mosley-Vargas, Emanuel Augustus, Tony DeMarco, Sugar Ray Robinson.

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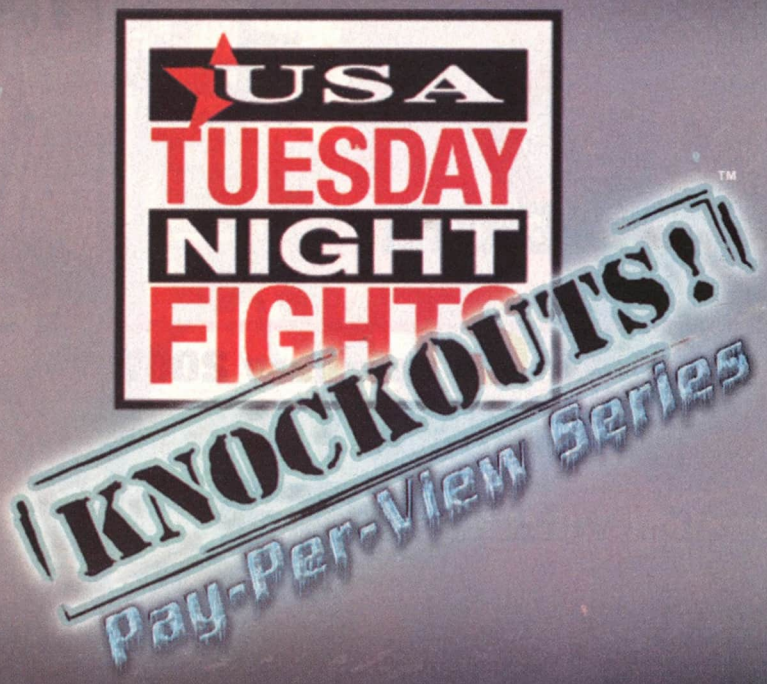

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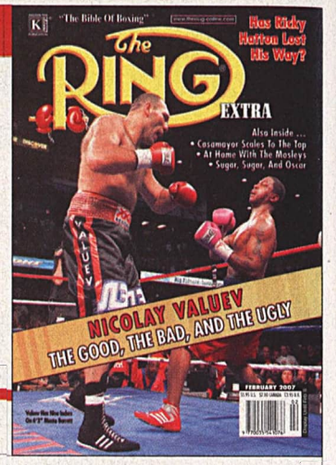

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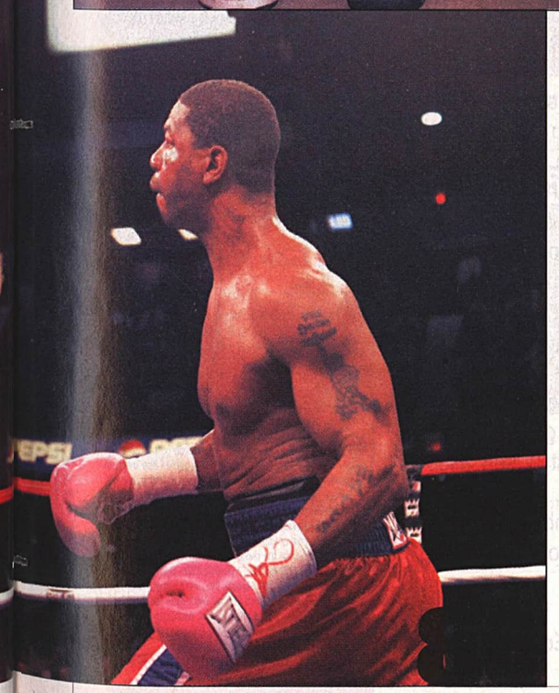

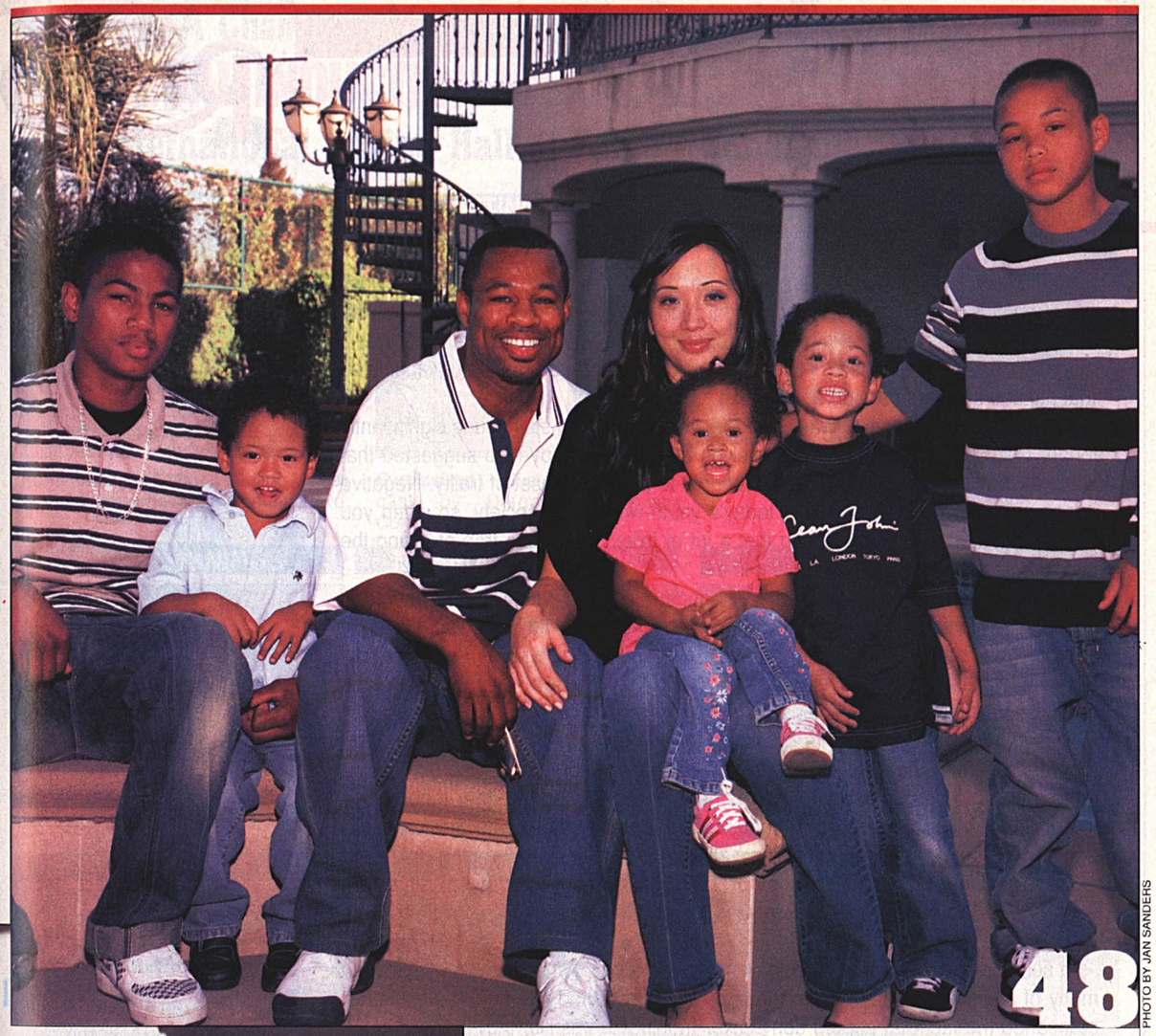

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Volume 86, No. 2 February 2007

The RING

In early-October *The New York Times* ran a fascinating article about frailty (loss of muscle mass, bone density, weight, and energy) among otherwise healthy senior citizens. Apparently, some suffer from this debilitating weakness at a much earlier age than others. While genetics plays a role, a recent study indicated that attitude also has considerable impact.

What it all boiled down to was that folks who think young stay young significantly longer than those who think of themselves as old. The study also suggested that cultural conditioning could predispose people to the early onset of frailty. Negative images of older people abound in today's youth-worshiping society, so when you think about it, it's hardly surprising that a lot of folks fall into the trap of acting the way people around them expect them to act.

By now, a lot of readers are probably wondering if I'm having a "senior moment" myself, and have forgotten I work for a boxing magazine. What does all of this have to do with the sad state of the heavyweight division or the outrageous cost of pay-per-view, you might ask? Well, I believe that, to a degree, the mainstream has been culturally predisposed against boxing by the boxing media itself.

I've ranted many times in the past about the mainstream media's disgraceful ignorance of the Sweet Science, and how the vast majority of newspaper sports editors and the producers of TV sports news have chosen to either ignore boxing or adopt a condescending attitude toward it, rather than go to the trouble of actually learning about the sport. And all of that is true. But it wasn't until I finished my coffee, put down my copy of *The Times*, and began my morning routine of scanning half-a-dozen boxing Web sites that another piece of the puzzle fell into place for me.

It seemed that every other article was bitching about something or another, with many of the writers putting down the sport they professed to love. One columnist bemoaned the fact that papers don't cover training camps like they used to in the good, old days. While that's a valid point, wouldn't it have been more productive to use the space to write a training camp piece?

The overall negativity has increased to such an extent that it has almost entirely drowned out the positive. Is it any wonder that those not familiar with boxing would have such a bad opinion of the sport? After all, if those immersed in it hold such a pessimistic point of view, the uninformed have little reason to think otherwise.

I'm not suggesting we ignore boxing's problems. THE RING has always fought against corruption and other evils inflicting the sport, and continues to do so as vigorously as ever. But we've never allowed that battle to overwhelm our coverage of all the things that make boxing, at its best, one of mankind's most extraordinary undertakings—a contest of will and skill that speaks to us on a level so primordial, so human, that there's usually no turning back once you're hooked.

But we must not forget that most of the world is not hooked, and like many of our senior citizens, non-boxing people are notably influenced by the generally negative vibe, much of which, in boxing's case, is created by those most closely associated with the sport.

The secret is balance, but the scales have tipped so far in a downbeat direction, a major attitude adjustment is drastically needed to save a noble sport. For boxing can only stay forever young if we believe it can.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 86, No. 2 (Extra, February), is published monthly by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8129. Single copy price $5.95 ($7.00 in Canada, £3.95 in U.K.). Subscription price $83.40 in the U.S., $99.00 in Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2006 London Publishing Co. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.
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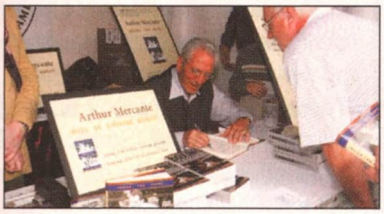

Hall of Fame referee Arthur Mercante signs his autobiography for the fans.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

Autographs . . . "Sweet Pea" Pernell Whitaker spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

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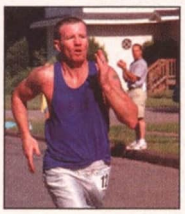

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

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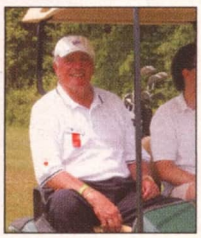


Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

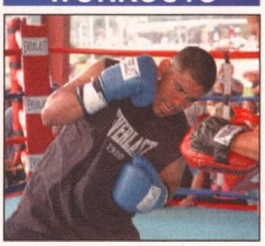
COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

Bob Arum and Angelo Dundee point to their plaques on the Hall of Fame Wall.

WORKOUTS



Juan Diaz works the bag mitts during daily public workouts.

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Hopkins' Heavyweight Hype

No one believes a fighter when he says he's going to retire. No one. But there seemed to be some veracity behind Bernard Hopkins' claim that he was officially through on June 10, 2006, after scoring an upset decision over Antonio Tarver to become light heavyweight champion of the world. The 41-year-old Hopkins' remarkable performance was an ideal swan song, and it made perfect sense for the future Hall of Famer to exit in a blaze of victory.

There were, however, tremors to the contrary in late-September.

"The Executioner" broached the idea of a return to the ring—at heavyweight—against WBC titleholder Oleg Maskaev. Hopkins' reasoning focused on the stranglehold fighters from the former Soviet Union have on the heavyweight division. Besides Maskaev, who is actually a nationalized citizen of the United States, Wladimir Klitschko (IBF), Sergei Liakhovich (WBO), and Nicolay Valuev (WBA) all hold heavyweight belts. Somebody from the U.S. has to step up. Why couldn't that someone be Hopkins?

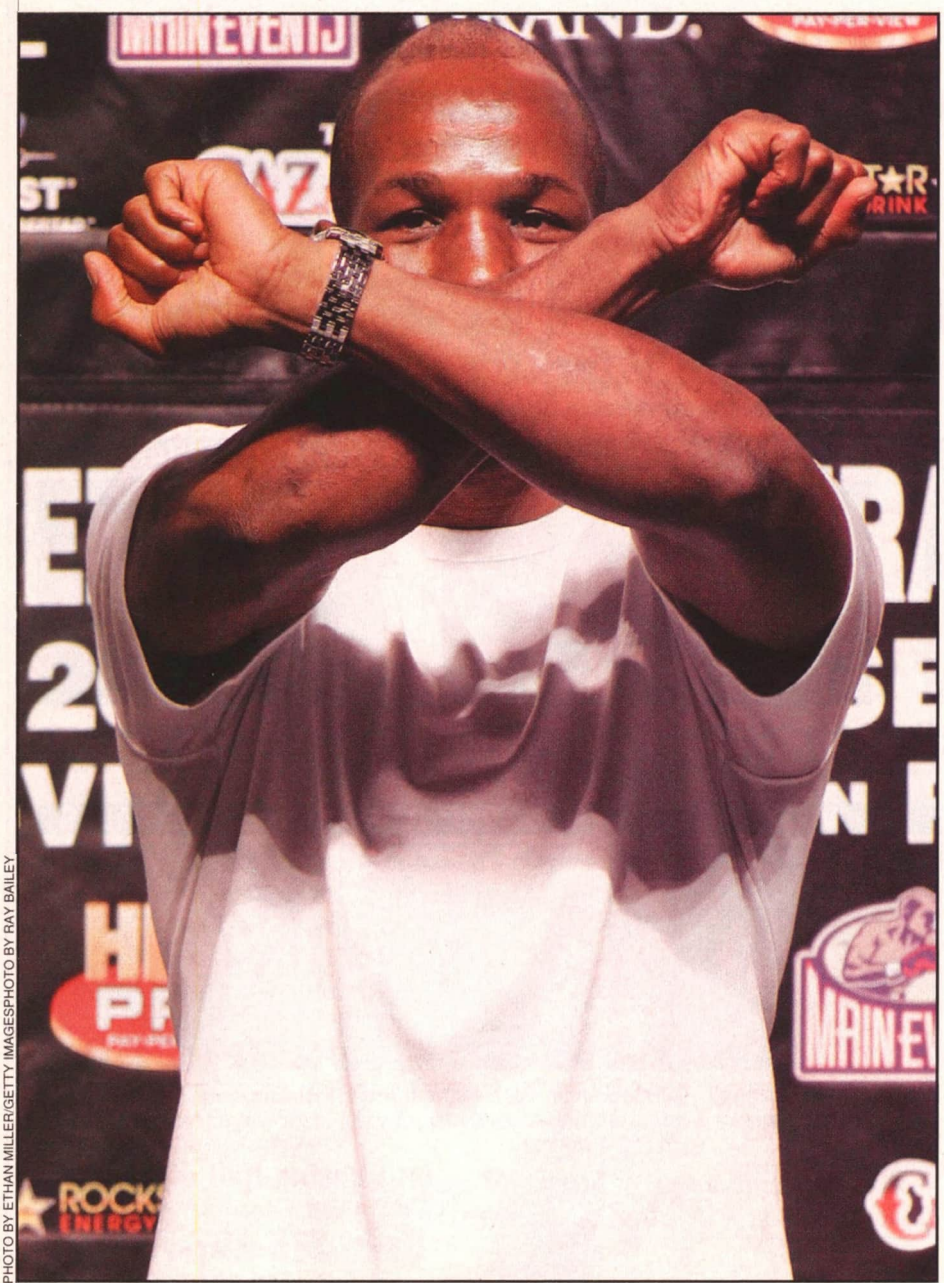


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Hopkins hypes himself as a heavyweight

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

"I'm always thinking," Hopkins told *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer Bernard Fernandez. "There are a lot of ideas buzzing around in my head. Some, you're better off ignoring. But this is one that definitely interests me. There's no American heavyweight champion now. Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano have to be spinning in their graves. All the belts are overseas somewhere. To not have a world champion from the United States in the most prestigious division in boxing is unacceptable. It's unacceptable that we don't have those bragging rights anymore."

Hopkins, 47-4-1 (32) with 1 no-contest, said he would need nine months to properly bulk up to 200 or 205 pounds for Maskaev. Yet, in September, it seemed to be just talk. Hopkins' trainer, Naazim Richardson, told THE RING that Hopkins was still enjoying his retirement and wasn't in training.

"Put a microphone in front of Bernard, and that's just 'X' doing his thing," Richardson said. "Right now, as far as I know, Bernard is still retired. Now, you put the right amount of money in front of him, and that's around $20-million, do that I'm sure he'll think about coming back. But as far as I know, he's still retired and enjoying it."

—Joe Santoliquito

Roger, Over, And Out

Roger Mayweather, the two-division former titleholder and uncle/trainer of pound-for-pound king Floyd Mayweather, had his license to work fights revoked for at least one year by the Nevada Athletic Commission back in April as a result of his provoking the in-ring mini-riot during his nephew's fight with Zab Judah. As it turns out, he didn't particularly need that license anyway. That's because it's hard to work anybody's corner from behind prison bars.

On September 19, Roger Mayweather was sentenced to six months in Clark County (Nevada) Detention Center for committing "battery with substantial bodily harm" against a 45-year-old woman—who just happens to be the grandmother of Mayweather's infant son.

According to testimony, on July 17, 2005, in Las Vegas, at about 11 p.m., Mayweather, 45, went to the apartment where 20-year-old Kimberly Pearson, with whom Mayweather has a baby, lives with her mother, Laurelle Haskins, 45. A third woman, 30-year-old Jennifer McDaniel, was in the apartment also. After Mayweather arrived, an argument erupted and Pearson tried to physically expel Mayweather from the apartment, but he broke away from her and she fell. The other two women then began slapping Mayweather, who responded by punching Haskins in the mouth, cutting her upper lip, and breaking her two upper front teeth in half. According to the arrest report, Mayweather also punched McDaniel, but she declined to press charges "because she is afraid of Mayweather."

Mayweather's trial took place on September 11, 2006. A jury found him guilty after 57 minutes of deliberation and he was sentenced eight days later.

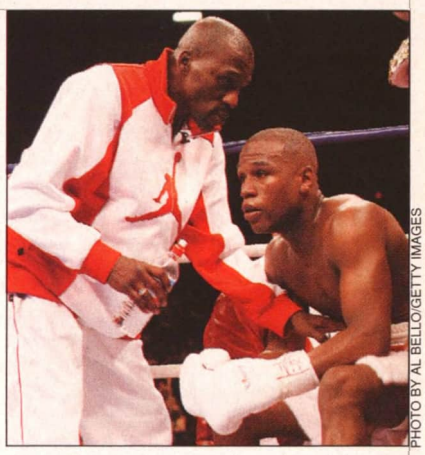


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Roger Mayweather may miss a few of "Pretty Boy's" upcoming fights

So how will this affect nephew Floyd's welterweight title challenge against Carlos Baldomir?

"After being in this sport for 20 years, I should be able to handle myself for one night," said the undefeated "Pretty Boy."

—Eric Raskin

Popo Says Goodbye With A Smile

Think Oscar De La Hoya will be exchanging handshakes with President George Bush when he finally announces his retirement from boxing? There's no questioning that "The Golden Boy" is popular, but he doesn't carry a nation quite the way Acelino Freitas does in his native Brazil.

Want to be re-elected in Brazil? Go get "Popo's" endorsement. That's why it was no surprise that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva sought out the boxing star soon after Freitas announced his retirement from boxing on October 4, confirmed in the United States by Art Pelullo, Freitas' promoter, the following day.

"Acelino is a real life rags-to-riches story," Pelullo said in a statement. "We've been together for nine years, starting with the Boxcino tournament in 1997, and he is very happy with the career that he's had and his very impressive accomplishments."

PHOTO BY VANDERLEI ALMEIDA/GETTY IMAGES

Freitas enjoys his retirement with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva

Freitas, 38-1 (32), won his first alphabet belt by knocking out Anatoly Alexandrov in the first round to capture the WBO super-featherweight title in 1999. He made six successful title defenses, before beating Joel Casamayor to unify the WBO and WBA 130-pound titles in 2002. He made three defenses of those titles before moving up and beating Artur Grigorian for the WBO lightweight belt in 2004.

Freitas suffered his lone loss when he was stopped by Diego Corrales in the 10th round of his first defense of the WBO lightweight title in August 2004. Corrales went on to become world lightweight champion, while Freitas fought just three more times. His final bout came on April 29, 2006, in a lackluster 12-round split-decision over Zahir Raheem.

Pelullo said the 31-year-old Freitas wants to promote boxing in Brazil.

"We both knew this day would come," Pelullo said. "We had a hell of a run together and I couldn't be more proud of him and how he handled himself throughout his career. I look forward to my ongoing working relationship with Acelino in the new phase of his career, as a boxing promoter.

"He's been able to provide a bright future for his family, as well as helping young boxers in Brazil with their careers. Who could ask for more than that?"

Only presidents looking to be re-elected—with the help of Popo.

—Joe Santoliquito

TV Fights of the Month

Date	Winner/Loser	Network	Division	Significance	Matchup	Result
9/22/06	Jesus Gonzalez KO 3 Ramon Espinoza	Telefutura	m	C-	C+	C
Too bad this ended just when it looked like it was about to get going						
9/22/06	Raul Marquez KO 7 Elco Garcia	Telefutura	jm	C	D+	C+
As long as Marquez is broadcasting, he'll never stay retired; he's too close to it						
9/23/06	Jorge Arce KO 4 Hawk Makepula	HBO	jb	B+	C	B-
It's hard to recall a fighter who needed a good pummeling more than Makepula did here						
9/26/06	Cornelius Bundrage KO 7 Norberto Bravo	ESPN	jm	C+	C+	C-
If this is how Bundrage fights when there's a death in the family, he should start hoping for a plague						
9/26/06	Grady Brewer W 10 Steve Forbes	ESPN	jm	B-	C+	D
If ever a Contender fight needed to be edited down, it was this one; talk about anti-climactic						
9/28/06	Raul Martinez KO 10 Ilido Julio	Versus	b	C-	B-	C+
This one could have been stopped much sooner, regardless of how much Julio liked getting hit						
9/28/06	Kevin Kelley W 10 Carlos Hernandez	Versus	l	C+	B+	B-
If you thought Kelley was way too far gone to win this one, you're not alone; good for him						
10/6/06	Rock Allen KO 4 Omar Ballard	Telefutura	w	C	D+	C+
Hey at least now we know Allen can get rocked a little and come back						
10/6/06	Oscar Larios KO 4 Roberto Bonilla	Telefutura	jf	B-	D-	C+
Solid return for Larios, even if Bonilla is no world-beater						
10/6/06	Jean Paul Mendy W 10 Henry Buchanan	Showtime	sm	B-	B+	B-
What's the record for the number of times a referee can warn a guy before penalizing him? We think David Mendoza broke it						
10/6/06	Anthony Hanshaw KO 3 LaFarrell Bunting	Showtime	sm	B-	C+	C+
Hanshaw was the favorite going into this and this is why; he's a full level above these other guys						
10/7/06	Tomasz Adamek W 12 Paul Briggs	HBO	lh	B+	A-	B+
We haven't seen a guy that good at slipping right hands since Mike Rossman						
10/7/06	Nicolay Valuev KO 11 Monte Barrett	HBO	h	C+	B+	C+
Okay, we'll ask the question since no one else has: How did a gargoyle like Valuev get that cute little wife?						
10/7/06	Vic Darchinyan Tech Dec. 6 Glenn Donaire	Showtime	fl	A-	B-	C-
Has everyone forgotten that when a fighter quits, it's called a TKO?						
10/7/06	**Joel Casamayor W 12 Diego Corrales**	**Showtime**	**world l**	**A+**	**A**	**B-**
Jose Luis Castillo and his buddies are still laughing about this; and they should be						
10/14/06	**Joe Calzaghe W 12 Sakio Bika**	**HBO**	**world sm**	**A+**	**C-**	**C-**
What, you were expecting another performance like the one Calzaghe gave against Lacy?						
10/14/06	Allan Green KO 8 Jerson Ravelo	ESPN2	sm	B-	B+	C+
Hey, how about Green against Manfredo with the winner against the husk of Roy Jones?						
10/14/06	Peter Manfredo Jr. KO 3 Joey Spina	ESPN2	sm	C+	B	B
Hey, Jesse, that's what you do a guy like Spina; Manfredo sharp under Freddie Roach's guidance						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net;Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino; Versus

Boxing Bookshelf

Writer Budd Schulberg's life has been so long and fascinating, and his work has been so critically acclaimed, that an argument could be made that the 93-year-old is a legend in his own time. That Schulberg's biggest love next to writing is boxing is a feather in the cap for the Sweet Science.

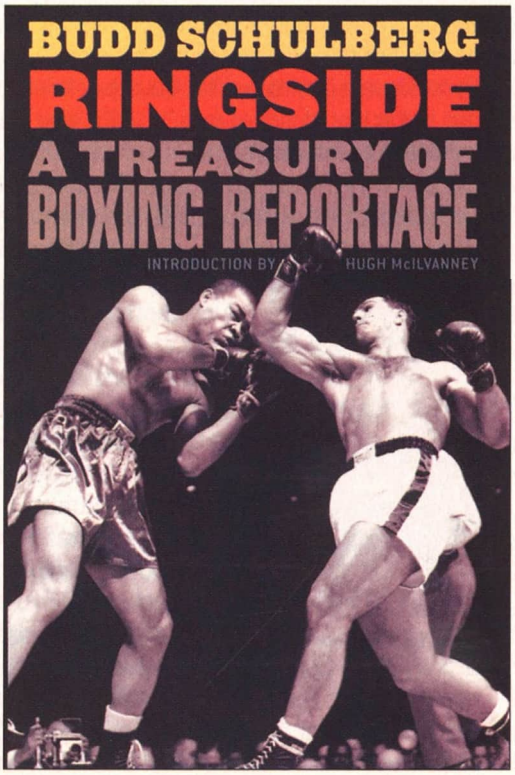
So it is rare that a Schulberg book can be considered good, but not great. Such is the case with his latest work, *Ringside: A Treasury Of Boxing Reportage* (343 pages, $27.95, Ivan R. Dee Publishers). Schulberg takes us through the boxing years with a compilation of many of his previously published articles from several boxing and non-boxing magazines. The chapters are arranged by articles on a given fighter, so the reader is exposed to two-to-four consecutive stories on the same man.

While the prose is typically impressive Schulberg, the chapters' structure promotes repetition. Tommy Bell is so often mentioned in glowing terms in the Robinson chapter that one would have thought Schulberg was his agent. And, in three different articles in the chapter on Mike Tyson, Schulberg quotes F. Scott Fitzgerald's line "There are no second acts in American lives; show me a hero, and I'll show you a tragedy," which, though an appropriate and worthy proverb, gives the reader the undeserved impression that Schulberg lacks originality.

As good as the writing is, one would have hoped for more stories about pre-1960 boxing and boxers. As long as Schulberg has been around, there would seem to be a treasure chest of secrets that most of us have never been exposed to and that we hunger for. After all, how many of today's writers are old enough to have known 1920s champions Fidel LaBarba and Jackie Fields? Please tell us something we have *not* seen.

The saving graces of Schulberg's collection are two topics—his chapter on when he briefly managed 1950s fringe heavyweight contender Archie McBride, and his 92-page story on the fascinating life of promoter Mike Jacobs, a masterpiece of boxing literature that, by itself, makes *Ringside* worth buying.

—Mike Greenhill



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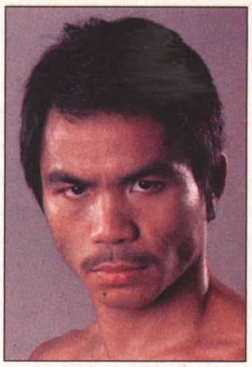
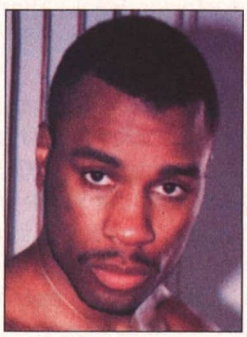
Outside the Ropes

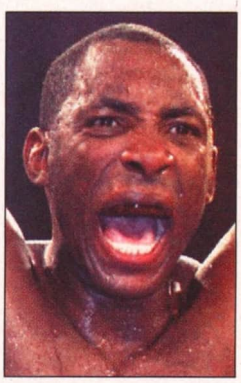
While Filipino idol **Manny Pacquiao** was training in California for his rubber match with **Erik Morales**, Pac-Man's wife, **Jinky**, gave birth to a baby girl back home in General Santos City. The newest addition to the Pacquiao family weighed in at seven pounds, four ounces ... Australian super middleweight contender **Danny Green**, 33, rescued a drowning man in monster surf at Yallingup Beach, south of Perth, where the boxer was on vacation with his family following his September 20 victory over **Jason Delisle**. Green spotted a man in his mid-20s in trouble about 200 meters offshore on an unpatrolled beach and paddled to his aid using a surfboard. "I'm pretty good at sea and I had my board with me," Green told secondsout.com. "I have been surfing for over 20 years in all conditions. I knew what was going on. The undertow had dragged him from the beach out to sea and he was getting pounded by the waves. The waves were really heavy and pretty treacherous. He passed in and out of consciousness a couple of times before I got him back" ... Retired junior middleweight **Fitz "The Whip" Vanderpool** is running for a seat on the Kitchener (Ontario) city council. "What I want to do is engage the younger people to get involved with voting because it's very important," said Vanderpool, who retired from the ring in April 2005 with an overall record of 24-7-4 (13) ... Former junior welterweight champion **Kostya Tszyu** is involved in a different kind of campaign. He is trying to help his homeland bring the 2014 Winter Olympics to the Russian city of Sochi, which is located on the Black Sea coast at the foot of the Caucus Mountains. Sochi, often referred to as the "Russian Riviera," has a $12-billion investment program with which it plans to built 12 sports venues ... British cruiserweight **Johnny Nelson**, 39, has decided to hang up his gloves following a series of injuries. Doctors advised him to quit following knee surgery in March 2006, but Nelson went back into training for an October match with **Enzo Maccarinelli**, only to suffer a back injury. "I've decided to say that's it, I'll call it a day," said Nelson. "The injuries that I have acquired through training for fights over the past years just will not let me step up to the next level in preparation for my next fight. In the mornings when I get up, boxing is no longer the first thing I think about. I think about the injuries." The **Brendan Ingle**-trained defensive specialist had a 20-year career that took several unusual twists and turns. Lacking self-confidence, Nelson admittedly froze in several significant fights in the early-1990s and fell out of favor with the British boxing establishment. Forced to hit the road in search of work, Nelson won fights in Italy, Germany, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, and the United States to reestablish himself. After losing a pair of contentious decision to **Adilson Rodrigues** in Brazil in 1995, Nelson never lost again, going 19-0-1 in his final 20 bouts and becoming a U.K. favorite and a staple of Sky TV. He won the WBO cruiser belt in '99 and made 14 successful defenses, winding up with an overall record of 45-12-2 (29) ... WBA light heavyweight titlist **Fabrice Tiozzo**, 37, also announced his retirement, on October 19. The Frenchman explained that he was weary of waiting for big fights. At the time of the announcement, Tiozzo, 48-2 (32), was scheduled to fight Argentinian **Hugo Hernan Garay** on November 18. "I stop. I hang up. I take my retirement," Tiozzo told French newspaper *L'Equipe*. "I have had enough of waiting for the big fight that never comes. With my age, I need true challenges and I know that no one will propose one to me anymore" ... A deadlocked Berks County (Pennsylvania) Court jury failed to return a verdict in the trial of **Kenneth Blunt**, 25, who was accused of murdering cruiserweight **Julian Letterlough**, 35, in July 2005. Blunt, who is already serving time for attempted murder, will be retried for the shooting death of Letterlough, in February 2007 ... The evening of September 23, 2006, was a very bad one indeed for junior bantam **Masibulele "Hawk" Makepula**. Not only was he stopped in the fourth round of his bout with **Jorge Arce**, shortly after leaving the ring in Hidalgo, Texas, he learned that his brother, **Patrick Makepula**, had been stabbed to death in East London, South Africa. It was Patrick who had introduced Masibulele to boxing ... Female lightweight **Shelby Walker**, 31, died of an apparent drug overdose in late-September. Walker, who was also a Brazilian jiu-jitsu expert, made her pro boxing debut in October 2002 and had her final bout in April '06. She compiled a record of 7-6-1 (6).



Pacquiao: A daddy again



Vanderpool: Running for city council



Nelson: Calling it quits

Quotable

"It's all fun. I'm not Mike Tyson. I'm not 20 years old. I'm not going to smash anybody. I'm not going to talk about smashing anybody's brains. You're not going to see that guy no more."

—Mike Tyson just before embarking on his pay-per-view "World Tour" in Youngstown, Ohio

"It's going backwards. That's not a bigger fight than me beating the heavyweight champ of the world. I cannot get the satisfaction or gratification fighting [Joe] Calzaghe."

—World light heavyweight champion Bernard Hopkins on why he wouldn't fight world super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe

Ratings Analysis

For Period Ended October 22, 2006

Heavyweights: Nicolay Valuev jumps from nine to seven, moving down John Ruiz (seventh last issue) and Calvin Brock (eighth last issue) one place each.

Cruiserweights: Johnny Nelson (fourth last issue) exits due to retirement, moving everyone from five to 10 up one place and making room for Enzo Maccarinelli at 10.

Light heavyweights: Tomasz Adamek (sixth last issue) moves up to five and Paul Briggs (eighth last issue) climbs to six. The changes move Roy Jones (fifth last issue) down to seven and Julio Gonzalez (seventh last issue) down to eight.

Super middleweights: Markus Beyer (second last issue) slips down two places to four, while Anthony Mundine (third last issue) and Jeff Lacy (fourth last issue) are bumped up one position. Lucian Bute (seventh last issue), Carl Froch (eighth last issue), and Allan Green (ninth last issue) all move up one place. Mger Mkrtchian (sixth last issue) and Mario Veit (10th last issue) both exit after suffering losses. Denis Inkin debuts at nine and Peter Manfredo Jr. comes in at 10.

Middleweights: Edison Miranda moves from six to three, based on his controversial loss to Arthur Abraham. Javier Castillejo (third last issue), Sam Soliman (fourth last issue), and Felix Sturm (fifth last issue) all drop one notch.

Junior middleweights: No changes.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior welterweights: No changes.

Lightweights: Drastic changes in this division, as Joel Casamayor becomes world champion with his decision victory over Diego Corrales, who exits to campaign at junior welter. Acelino Freitas (fourth last issue) exits due to retirement. Julio Diaz (third last issue) moves up one place, while Zahir Raheem (fifth last issue), Jesus Chavez (sixth last issue), and David Diaz (seventh last issue) each move up two places. Nate Campbell enters at six, Almazbek Raiymkulov comes in at seven, and Jose Santa Cruz returns to the ratings at nine. Juan Carlos Santa Diaz (ninth last issue) moves to eight.

Junior lightweights: Carlos Hernandez (10th last issue) exits following the loss to Kevin Kelley and subsequent retirement. Alex Arthur enters at 10.

Featherweights: No changes.

Junior featherweights: Celestino Caballero (second last issue) becomes number one after stopping Somsak Sithchatchawal (first last issue). Sithchatchawal drops to three, while Ricardo Cordoba (third last issue) moves up to two. Daniel Ponce De Leon (seventh last issue) jumps to four, sliding down Sergio Manuel Medina (fourth last issue), Gabula Vabaza (fifth last issue), and Steve Molitor (sixth last issue) one place each.

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior bantamweights: Jorge Arce debuts at nine, moving up from flyweight. Arce replaces Hawk Makepula, who was stopped by Arce in four rounds.

Flyweights: Jorge Arce's departure at four moves everyone from five to 10 up one place, making an opening for Jose Lopez to debut at 10.

Junior flyweights: Hugo Cazares becomes world champion after beating Nelson Dieppa (second last issue), who drops to four. Ulises Solis jumps from three to one, Koki Kameda goes from four to two, and Juan Landaeta re-enters at three after a close loss to Kameda.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for-pound: No changes.

The RING
"The Bible Of Boxing"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
2. **Winky Wright**
   Middleweight
3. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Jermain Taylor**
   Middleweight
5. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
6. **Marco Antonio Barrera**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **Rafael Marquez**
   Bantamweight
8. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight
9. **Jose Luis Castillo**
   Junior Welterweight
10. **Joe Calzaghe**
    Super Middleweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended October 22, 2006

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Vic Darchinyan stays in range of a world title as the third-rated flyweight

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by The Ring are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between The Ring's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 46-3 (41)
2. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY 33-5 (26)
3. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 27-1 (22)
4. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 69-5-3 (43)
5. **SERGEI LIAKHOVICH** Belarus, 23-1 (14)
6. **LAMON BREWSTER** Los Angeles, CA 33-3 (29)
7. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 45-0 (33)
8. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 41-6-1 (28)
9. **CALVIN BROCK** Charlotte, NC 29-0 (22)
10. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore MD 41-6-2 (33)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 43-4 (37)
2. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 35-3 (11)
3. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 34-2-1 (21)
4. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 25-2-1 (15)
5. **SERGEI DZINDZIRUK** Germany 32-0 (21)
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 38-4 (30)
7. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 26-4 (22)
8. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta. GA 38-2 (28)
9. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 37-3-1 (31)
10. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 40-10-1 (21)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 38-0-1 (20)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 45-3-1 (34)
3. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 39-5-2 (23)
4. **RODOLFO LOPEZ** Mexico 19-2-1 (13)
5. **TAKASHI KOSHIMOTO** Japan 39-1-2 (17)
6. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 30-3-1 (18)
7. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 25-2-2 (14)
8. **SPEND ABAZI** Denmark 32-1 (10)
9. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 25-0-1 (18)
10. **NICKY COOK** England 26-0 (15)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 41-3 (31)

1. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 25-2 (18)
2. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 28-1-1 (19)
3. **SOMSAK SITHCHATCHAWAL** Thailand 46-2-1 (37)
4. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 30-1 (28)
5. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 25-0 (15)
6. **GABULA VABAZA** South Africa 23-0-1 (5)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 22-0 (8)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 33-5 (28)
9. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 26-3 (17)
10. **MICHAEL HUNTER** England 26-0-1 (12)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 36-3 (32)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 20-2 (7)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 51-3-2 (36)
4. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 19-0-1 (6)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 19-2 (15)
6. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 35-4 (20)
7. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN** Thailand 67-9 (44)
8. **IRENE PACHECO** Colombia 33-1 (24)
9. **SIMONE MALUDROTTU** Italy 23-1 (9)
10. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 25-1 (16)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: O'NEIL BELL
Atlanta, GA 26-1-1 (24)

1. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 33-3-2 (26)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 19-0 (10)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
France 32-3 (22)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-2 (17)
5. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 34-2 (16)
6. **DAVID HAYE**
England 17-1 (16)
7. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZK**
Poland 36-1 (27)
8. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 22-0-1 (15)
9. **GRIGORY DROZD**
Russia 25-0 (20)
10. **ENZO MACCARINELLI**
Wales 25-1 (19)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 47-4-1 (32)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 24-4 (18)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 25-0 (15)
3. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 40-3-1 (24)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 44-11-2 (29)
5. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 31-0 (21)
6. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 25-3 (18)
7. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 50-4 (38)
8. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 40-3 (24)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 26-2 (13)
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 23-0 (15)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 42-0 (31)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 38-0 (29)
2. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 26-3 (20)
3. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 21-1 (17)
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 34-3-1 (13)
5. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 24-0 (18)
6. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Canada 17-0 (16)
7. **CARL FROCH**
England 19-0 (15)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 23-0 (16)
9. **DENIS INKIN**
Germany 29-0 (22)
10. **PETER MANFREDO JR.**
Pawtucket, RI 26-3 (12)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 25-0-1 (17)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 50-3-1 (25)
2. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 22-0 (17)
3. **EDISON MIRANDA**
Colombia 26-1 (23)
4. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 61-6 (41)
5. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 32-8 (13)
6. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 25-2 (11)
7. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 18-0 (14)
8. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 23-2 (10)
9. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-2 (13)
10. **SCOTT DANN**
England 25-2 (17)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CARLOS BALDOMIR
Argentina 43-9-6 (13)

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 36-0 (24)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 33-4 (24)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 34-4 (25)
4. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 26-2 (12)
5. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 26-1 (24)
6. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 37-3 (11)
7. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 40-8 (31)
8. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 31-0 (23)
9. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
Puerto Rico 23-0 (18)
10. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 29-1 (18)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 41-0 (30)

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 27-0 (22)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 54-7-1 (47)
3. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 34-1-2 (19)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 27-2-1 (18)
5. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 43-8-1 (28)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 31-5-1 (17)
7. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 37-3-1 (27)
8. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 35-1 (20)
9. **DEMETRIUS HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 24-0-1 (10)
10. **CESAR RENE CUENCA**
Argentina 26-0 (1)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOEL CASAMAYOR
Miami, FL 34-3-1 (21)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 30-0 (15)
2. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 33-3 (24)
3. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 27-2 (16)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 42-3 (29)
5. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 32-1-1 (17)
6. **NATE CAMPBELL**
Jacksonville, FL 29-5-1 (24)
7. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Las Vegas, NV 23-1-1 (14)
8. **JUAN CARLOS DIAZ**
Spain 31-0 (16)
9. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ**
Mexico 23-2 (13)
10. **RAMAZAN PALYANI**
Philadelphia, PA 14-0-1 (8)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 42-3-2 (32)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 63-4 (42)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-4 (34)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 26-0 (17)
5. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 46-3-1 (33)
6. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 26-3 (18)
7. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 20-0 (20)
8. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 24-2-1 (12)
9. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 46-3-1 (37)
10. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 23-1 (17)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 32-3-1 (8)
2. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 8-0 (5)
3. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 30-2 (16)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 24-1 (15)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 32-2-1 (24)
6. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 28-2 (26)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico 28-3-2 (11)
8. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 30-5 (20)
9. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 45-3-1 (35)
10. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 23-2 (10)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 62-2 (32)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 27-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 27-0 (21)
4. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 23-0-2 (15)
5. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 20-1 (7)
6. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 28-3-1 (13)
7. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 39-14-3 (22)
8. **LUIS MALDONADO**
Mexico 33-1-1 (25)
9. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 29-2-2 (19)
10. **JOSE LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 33-7-2 (29)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: HUGO CAZARES
Mexico 24-3-1 (18)

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 22-1-2 (16)
2. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 12-0 (10)
3. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 20-4-1 (16)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 24-3-2 (13)
5. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 24-2-1 (10)
6. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 19-1 (12)
7. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-3-1 (7)
8. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 34-5-1 (20)
9. **NOBUAKI MASUDA**
Japan 23-3-1 (3)
10. **OMAR SALADO**
Mexico 14-0-2 (7)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 27-0 (6)
2. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 20-1-3 (8)
3. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 51-7-4 (23)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 16-1 (6)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 17-2 (7)
6. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-3-1 (10)
7. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 37-4-1 (30)
8. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 23-1 (18)
9. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-8-3 (13)
10. **ERIBERTO GEJON**
Philippines 21-1-1 (13)

By Jeff Ryan

Some Loose Change

The march of progress may be inevitable in other sports, but boxing has always seemed reluctant to issue that particular march a parade permit. With the exception of cutting three rounds from its championship bouts and adding a bunch of weight classes, the fight game hasn't made a whole lot of changes since the days when Rocky Marciano launched his left hooks through the cigar smoke hanging in the air at Yankee Stadium.

Baseball and football went to artificial turf, tennis developed larger and more powerful rackets, and basketball added a three-point line. But boxers still taste the canvas, not some other surface, gloves haven't advanced to the point where strawweights hit like heavyweights, and a single knockdown still wins you a round by two points, not three.

Boxing is like that old family restaurant that you and the folks still love because the recipes (never mind the decor and wait staff) haven't changed since the Carter Administration. Yet maybe it wouldn't hurt to offer some new dishes, to spice up the menu and make the place more appealing to the masses. There are plenty of good ideas boxing could borrow—oh, hell, just outright steal—from the other sports that would enhance the Sweet Science greatly. (Mike Tyson has apparently already swiped one: a meaningless exhibition schedule.) Some are radical, some are tame, some have been experimented with before, but all are long overdue.

Such as ...

1) Overtime: We're going to use the football version of this because both baseball and hockey refuse to turn off the lights until someone wins, no matter if that means a silly shootout at exhausted goaltenders or an 18-inning marathon. If an NFL game is still tied after overtime, however, everyone gets to go home and kiss his sister.

Under my plan, if a fight is even after the cards are totaled, the two warriors will fight one overtime round. And if that still doesn't produce a winner? Then we live with the draw. If the scores are added quickly, perhaps electronically when possible, the delay between the end of the battle and the OT round should be minimal. In any case, let's not assume that the extra break time is a negative. Sure, the fighters might cool down, but they'll also get a badly needed rest and a chance to recharge their batteries. Just imagine the action-packed 13th rounds that could ensue.

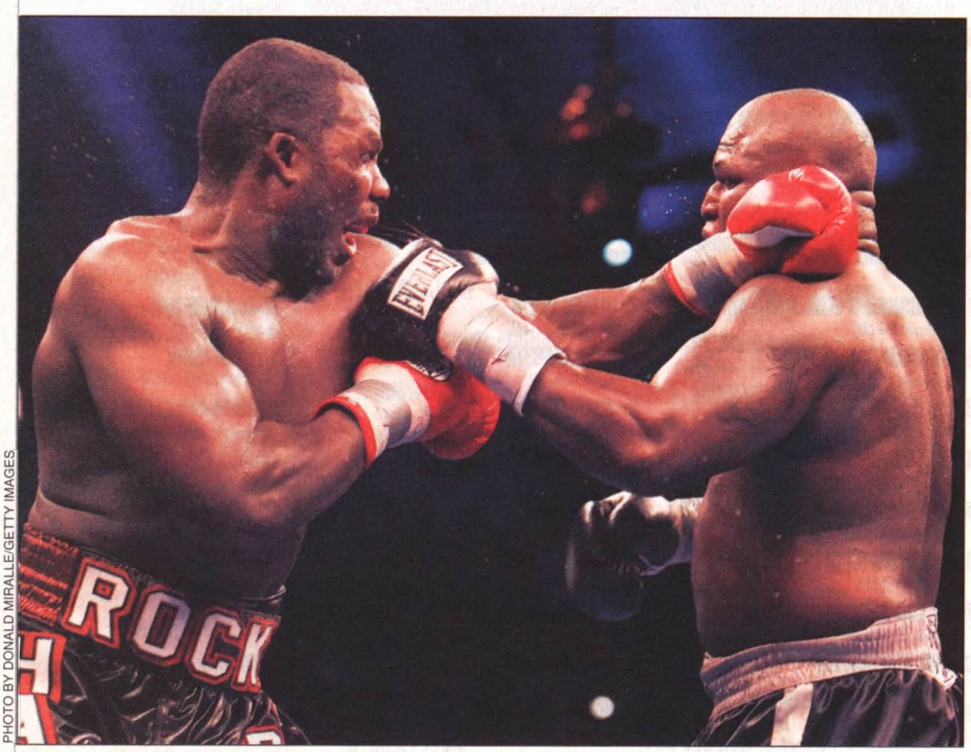


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

A 13th round probably would have prevented Rahman-Toney from being declared a draw

2) Instant replay: Thank you again, NFL. Think of all the controversy and confusion this would prevent. Was that cut caused by a punch or a butt? Did the staggered fighter's glove touch the canvas, thus constituting a knockdown? Was that left hook to the body really low? Or are we witnessing the greatest acting job since Anthony Hopkins in *The Silence Of The Lambs*?

Because a boxing match can't be interrupted as easi-

PHOTO BY MICHAEL W. HEAYN

Under Ryan's proposal, Hopkins would be an automatic Hall of Fame inductee

ly or frequently as a football game, we'll grant each corner just one challenge per bout. With today's TV technology and a special replay official on hand, it should be possible to issue a ruling in the minute between rounds. (Heck, Larry Merchant can usually make the call in a few seconds.) If the ref's original call is overturned, let's say the fall he thought was a slip was actually a knockdown, the judges will be allowed to change their cards. If a fight is stopped and ruled a technical draw, but the replay shows a left jab rather than a butt opened the gash, the verdict would be changed to a TKO. And so on.

Granted, this might be the toughest change to implement smoothly. Obviously, replay can only be used when a bout is televised with multiple camera angles. And there are a lot of scenarios in which it might prove problematic. So let's limit its use to debates about low blows, cuts, and knockdowns. At least until the system is perfected.

3) Creative ad placement: Pick any matchup you're anxious to see: Floyd Mayweather-Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton-Miguel Cotto, Jermain Taylor-Joe Calzaghe, etc. Now envision that marquee gem ending on a TKO 48 seconds into the first round because one of the fighters slips on a Corona ad painted on the canvas and shatters his ankle. Worse yet, what if the injury effectively ends his career?

Year after year, we watch fighters crash to the deck not from bolos, but from logos. As if there isn't enough advertising on the scoreboard, suspended over the ring, on the turnbuckles, on the combatants' trunks, and (as we've seen a few times) even on the combatants themselves, there's almost always a big ad splashed in ring center. You show me a canvas that hasn't been turned into a Times Square billboard, and I'll show you a fight card in a V.F.W. hall in Ames, Iowa.

The solution is simple and we'll borrow it from tennis. During some matches, a computerized product logo appears behind the baseline, conveniently disappearing if a player runs over the top of it. (It's similar to that yellow first-down line on NFL telecasts.) Boxing should utilize the same technology. We'll be more likely to buy that Nemiroff vodka if it doesn't leave a bad taste in our mouths before we drink it.

4) Different guidelines for the Hall of Fame: The World Golf Hall of Fame automatically puts a candidate on the ballot if he has two victories from among The Masters, The Players Championship, the U.S. Open, British Open, and PGA. Let's go golf one better and grant a fighter automatic induction if he has ever held THE RING belt (or simultaneously possessed the WBA, WBC, and IBF crowns) in two different weight classes.

5) Extra officials: If baseball goes from four umpires on the field during the regular season to six during the postseason, why doesn't boxing employ more judges for the major events? Anywhere between four and seven would be nice. That would greatly lessen the chance of a bad decision, particularly if the fight game utilized ...

6) Trimmed mean scoring: Here's how it's done in figure skating: The judges' highest and lowest scores are scrapped and only the remaining scores count. What boxing should do is simply eliminate the card with the widest margin of victory for either fighter.

For example, if three of the five (yes, five) judges score an Oleg Maskaev-Wladimir Klitschko bout for Maskaev by two, two, and nine points, and the other two judges give Klitschko the nod by one and three points, the nine-point verdict would be tossed and the contest would be a draw. What's the logic behind this? Well, ridiculously one-sided scoring in a close fight (Remember Jose J. Guerra scoring Leonard-Hagler 118-110, while his counterparts both saw it 115-113?) could be a sign that a judge a) was influenced by the crowd, or b) showed favoritism to one of the competitors for whatever reason. Throwing out the card that bears no resemblance to reality would help render a more just decision. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Why Sam Will Have To Play It Again

Was that the scent of justice coming from the WBC when it ordered Samuel Peter into a rematch with James Toney? Most of the free world had viewed the first contest as an obvious Toney victory, while two of the judges, viewing things from a world of their own, scored it for the bulbous bangoramus from Nigeria. If Peter won that fight, then mobster Israel "Ice Pick Willie" Alderman fought clean. And speaking of fighting clean, Peter's publicity releases call him "The Nigerian Nightmare," but a more apt nomenclature—given his repeated thumps to the back of the neck—would be Peter the Rabbit. Forget the Marquis of Queensbury. Somebody should inform him about the Geneva Convention.

Yes, it's nice to see an alphabet gang make a decent decision. But when it happens, it's unlikely justice was even on the scale. What's weighed is money, clout, favors owed and delivered, that sort of thing. They don't exactly consult an ethics manual.

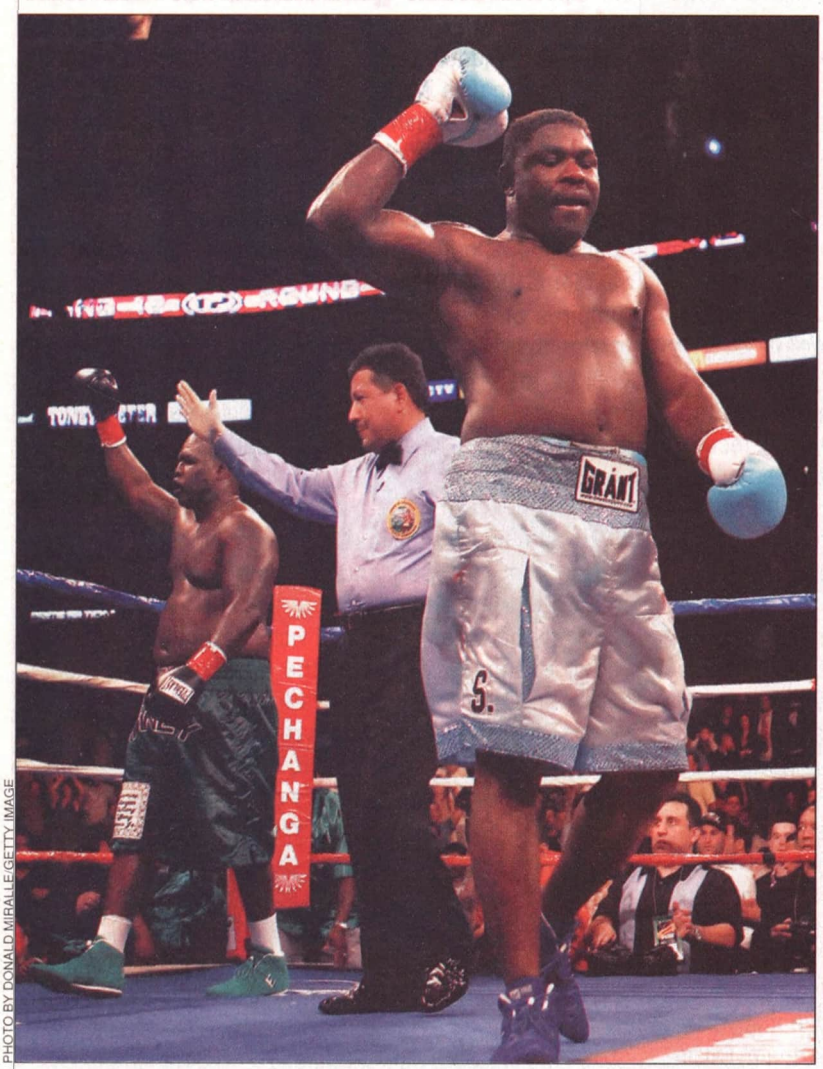


PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGE

The WBC has ordered Toney and Peter to do it again

Although neither of the fighters holds an actual WBC title, alphabet gangs, in their never-ending battle to squeeze more sap from the tree, have discovered they don't need to wait for an actual title fight to influence events and charge fees. They can also set up "elimination" and "interim title" contests. Down the road, the winner of Toney-Peter is supposed to get a crack at the belt now held by WBC titlist Oleg Maskaev. But lots can happen along the way to alter that scenario.

Most rational souls would never want to get in there again with a fighter who'd fouled them repeatedly over 12 rounds, but Toney is eager to play it again with Sam. Prizefighters don't look at the world the way other people do. I remember interviewing Diego Corrales after his first tango with foul-master Joel Casamayor. He said the back of his skull was so sore the next day he felt like he'd been fighting with his back turned. Yet Corrales, like Toney, was eager for a rematch. It's like hoping you can get up on time to catch the first bus to Hell.

The most entertaining passage in the WBC rematch announcement came at the very end: "The WBC invites all parties to kindly restrain from using a hard language in their public statements, since boxing is a sport for gentlemen and we all would

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Note how high up the tape is on Barrera's glove

like to keep it that way." I guess that means instead of applying petroleum jelly and ice, the cornermen will be serving tea and crumpets. I have no idea what a crumpet is, but then I didn't grow up as a ward of the gentlemanly WBC. Are crumpets related to strumpets?

There were lots of reasons for those of us who care about the sport to want this rematch. A homicidal rabbit-punching heavyweight champ is nothing boxing needs right now. There's also something very creepy about watching an undeserving dirty fighter stare sweetly into the camera and thank God for his victory. Meanwhile, Toney, 38, has telltale gray hairs plus a ballooning gut to match his opponent's.

They wouldn't have to do this all over again if the Nevada commission had assigned three judges capable of scoring the fight. Toney and Peter would be moving on to separate destinations, and we'd be mixing and matching other intriguing matches. Dr. Margaret Goodman has been warning for some time that something is rotten in Nevada. Its commission, a classic case of what goes wrong when politics outweigh competence, is getting it wrong faster than you can line up matches for it to screw up. The political hacks and casino cronies favored by Governor Kenny Guinn are not what are required for the most important boxing commission in the world.

Another grievous example of the commission's ineptitude stared us all in the face throughout the long-awaited rematch between Marco Antonio Barrera and Rocky Juarez. How could the inspectors fail to notice that Barrera's gloves were taped all the way up to the thumbs? That's cheating for at least two reasons. It

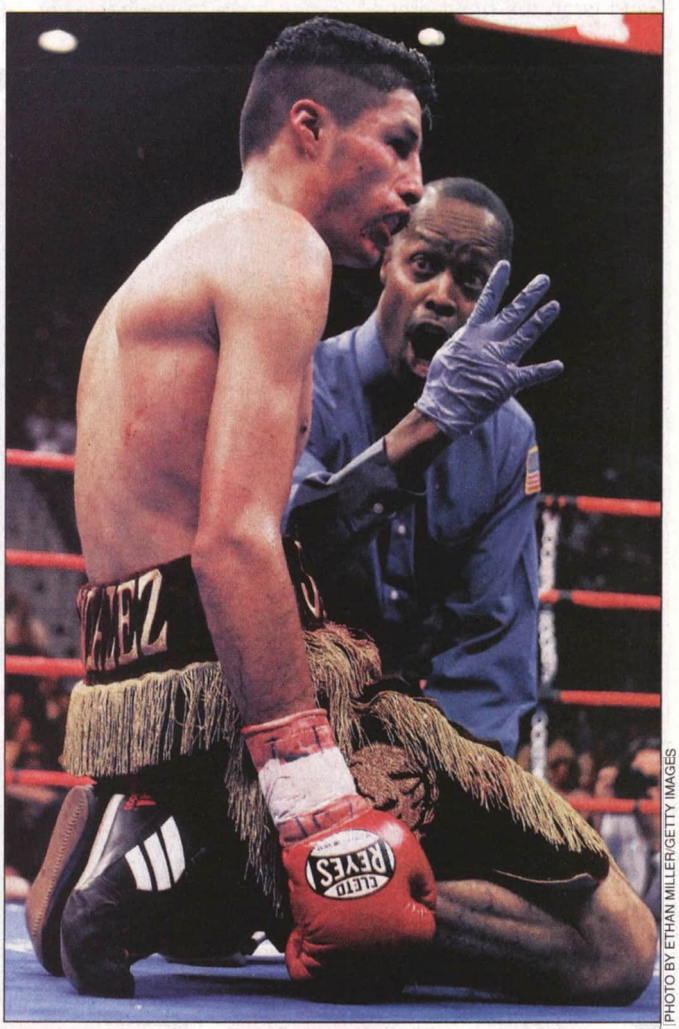


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Gonzalez was gradually worn down by Vazquez' more damaging blows

could enable cornermen to manipulate the padding, shoving more of it down around the wrists and holding it in place, making the fists more lethal. Even the most mediocre inspector should recognize the possibility that this could occur.

Excess tape also encases the glove in a sandpaper-like material much more likely to bruise and bust up an opponent than leather. As you recall, the fight turned on a Barrera uppercut in the second round that quickly shut down one side of Juarez' face. Whether the tape came into play on that punch is not known, but the most lethal way to torture an opponent with all that illegal tape is to throw uppercuts that swipe across the face.

Taping hands and gloves is a highly skilled specialty. There are guys who make a living at it. The mission is to give your fighter maximum protection while inflicting the most severe damage possible on the opponent—within the rules. When you see a fighter compete with gloves like Barrera's on national TV, you know you're seeing a witless commission at work. What else was going on that we couldn't see? And why didn't Juarez' corner make a stink? Remember when Bernard Hopkins' people forced Trinidad's handlers to tear the illegal tape off his knuckles and wrap the hand properly? You have to wonder what we'll see next in Nevada. Perhaps a touch of barbed wire at the end of the glove.

No Imagination: No question. Israel Vazquez vs. Jhonny Gonzalez is an obvious candidate for Fight of the Year—steaming with action, bravery, talent, strategy, knockdowns, and, of course, surprises. HBO's pay-per-view division can certainly be excused for making the more-anticipated Barrera-Juarez II the main event. But because that one turned out to be a snorifier, someone over there should have showed a little creativity when it came time to schedule a replay fight for HBO subscribers. You could just hear some overpaid simpleton pointing out that repeating the main event the next week is the way they've always done it in the past, so it's what they must keep doing. When the pitcher throws you a change-up, you don't swing at the fastball that was in your mind a moment ago. Graveyards are filled with corporations that showed the same non-creativity. Studebaker, anyone?

History Repeats: Vazquez vs. Gonzalez paralleled a fight that sticks in the mind of everyone who saw it 12 years ago—Meldrick Taylor vs. Julio Cesar Chavez. Once again we had one fighter (substitute Gonzalez for

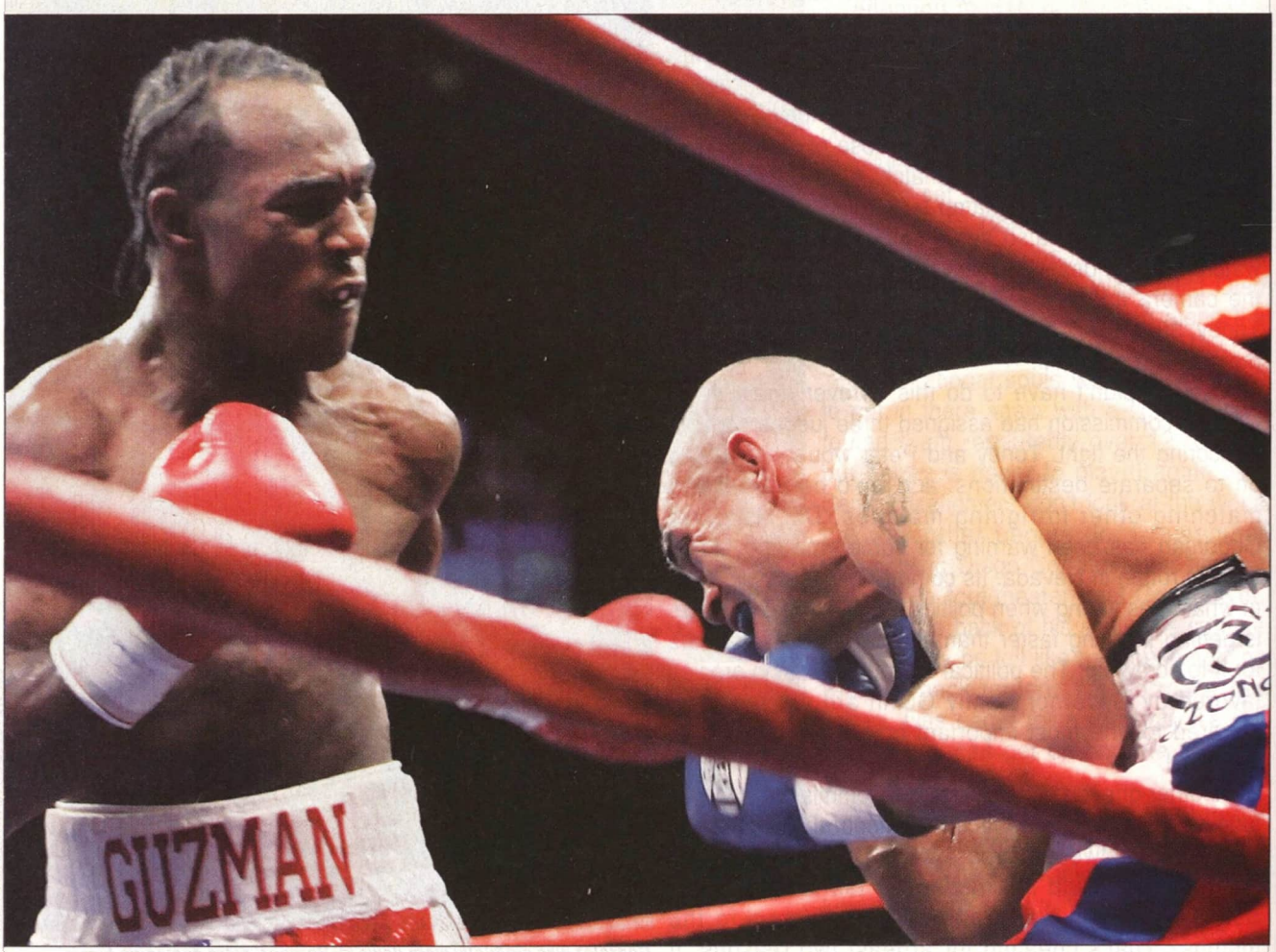


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

No way Guzman-Barrios should have been a split decision

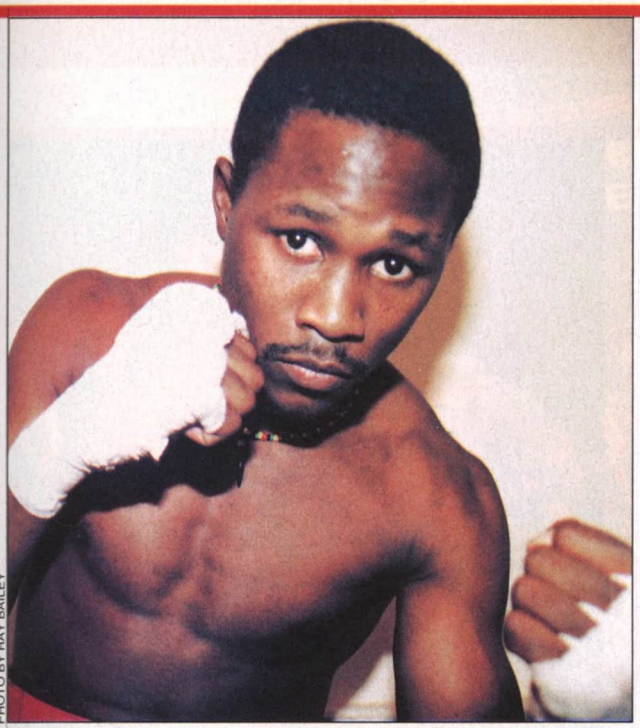


PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

Will St. Clair ever fight in the U.S. again?

Taylor) giving his opponent a boxing lesson. Yet, almost magically, the fighter clearly ahead on points got more and more busted up by the brute force of his opponent (here substitute Vazquez for Chavez) until at some point it became clear that the fighter with more points built up was in serious danger—ambulances and breathing tubes danger. If Taylor's corner had stepped up with a towel the way Gonzalez' did, Taylor might be a healthier man today.

Magoo: To judge Bill Graham, who had it 114-113 for the determined but clearly bested Jorge Barrios over Joan Guzman, also on the Barrera-Juarez undercard. Fortunately, Carol Castellano and William Lerchman saw it for the classy Guzman, 114-113 and 115-112, respectively, allowing him to retain his super featherweight alphabet title. Castellano was way off also. The match wasn't nearly that close.

Graham, according to credible Robert Morales of *The Long Beach Press-Telegram*, is 90 years old. Would it be indelicate to wonder whether someone born while General Blackjack Pershing was chasing Pancho Villa around Mexico is capable of judging an intricate, fast-moving sport like boxing?

Magoo 2: To the bumbling Nevada commission, for all the reasons stated above.

Gates Closed: Unless his management learns to move mountains at U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services, Gairy St. Clair will have trouble capitalizing on the IBF junior lightweight title he lifted off Cassius Baloyi in South Africa. A reliable source tells me that because of two prior immigration violations, St. Clair, a native of Guyana who fights out of Australia, is barred from the U.S., where he hasn't competed since Vivian Harris outpointed him in 1999 at Philadelphia's Blue Horizon.

St. Clair, 38-3-2 (17), would like to defend his title in the U.S., perhaps even in a unification bout with road warrior Manny Pacquiao. Instead, he's stuck on boxing back roads. His first defense was scheduled against Malcolm Klassen in South Africa.

Diaz Decision: Juan Diaz didn't do much for his squeaky-clean, college boy image when he walked away from a verbal agreement with Golden Boy to sign with Don King. King dangled a sweeter signing bonus accompanied as always by the mesmerizing stink of Don King decisions. Jose Luis Ramirez over Pernell Whittaker, Felix Trinidad over Oscar De La Hoya—those kinds of decisions. Fighters want to get on the right side of them, but they pay a price, which is why no other promoter is so regularly sued by his fighters. ■

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Diaz is now throwing punches for Don King

[Camera Clicks]

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Let's get ready to revel! Ring announcer Michael Buffer and the lovely Christine Prado make their arrival at Tao in Las Vegas for the nightclub's one-year anniversary party. Quick question: Does Buffer do his own arrival announcements when he shows up somewhere? "Now entering the party, wearing the pinstriped suit, with the hot chick half his age by his side, meeeeeeeeeee!"

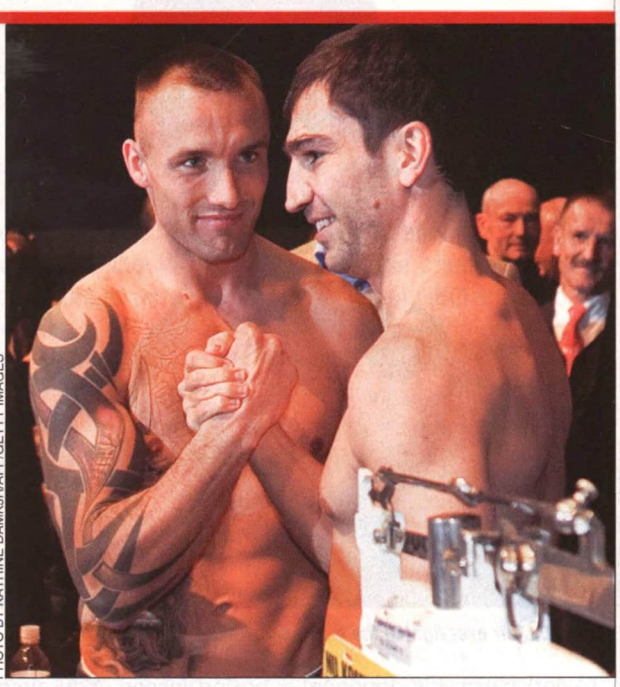


PHOTO BY KATRINE DAMKJR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

It's official: Nobody in boxing sucks worse at staredowns than Markus Beyer. The three-time super middleweight beltholder was no match for the determined Mikkel Kessler at the weigh-in, and he was no match in the ring either, losing the alphabet unification match by third-round knockout. On the other hand, if it were a who-looks-more-like-Hans-Gruber-from-Die-Hard contest, Beyer would have it sewn up.

PHOTO BY GREG WHITE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tszyu goes to the zoo: Former junior welter king Kostya Tszyu arrives at the Australia Zoo in Beerwah for a memorial service honoring "The Crocodile Hunter" Steve Irwin, who was famously killed by a stingray in September. For all those expecting an announcement about Tszyu's next fight anytime soon, take a close look at his fleshy face and soft middle; James Toney aside, that's not the way bodies on people intending to fight again look.

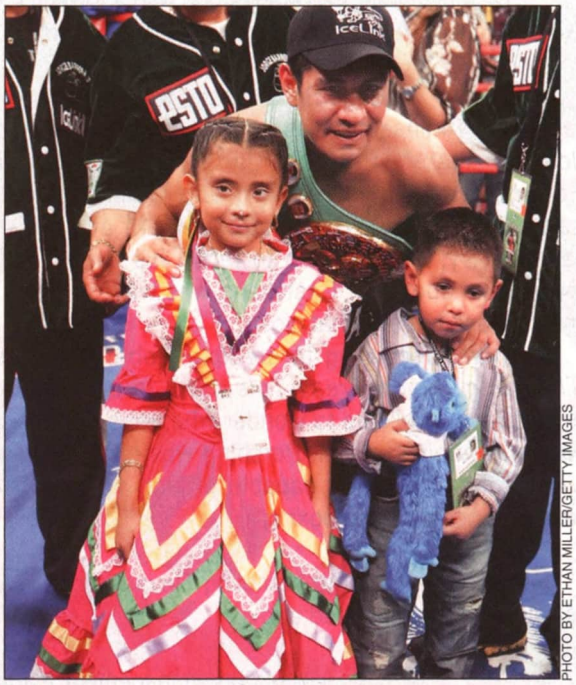
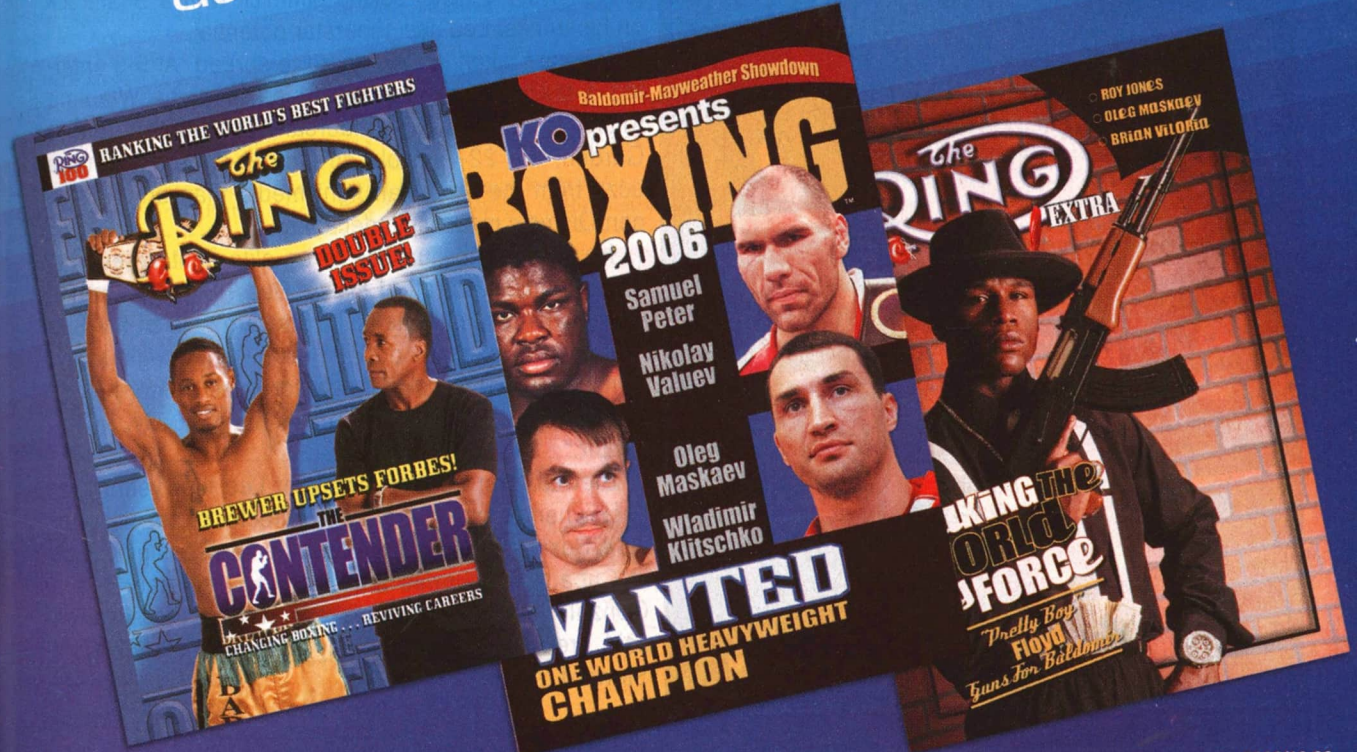


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Time to meet the real baby-faced assassins: After scoring the decision win in his rematch with Rocky Juarez, Barrera poses in the ring with daughter Jimena and son Marco Jr., both of whom are sporting faces approximately as clean and untouched-looking as their dad's. No truth to the rumor that when Barrera struggled in a couple of the early rounds, Marco Jr. waved his blue rally monkey in the air to inspire his father to victory.

Look for these London Publishing titles at a newsstand near you!



By Don Stewart

Andy Lee Middleweight

By early-2005, Andy Lee had already spent a few months working with Emanuel Steward in Los Angeles, where the Hall of Fame trainer prepped heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko for his scheduled defense against Hasim Rahman. Apparently, Steward still wasn't completely sure about the Irish superprospect.

After they returned to Detroit, Steward brought Lee to the legendary Kronk Gym for the first time. Steward told Lee that it would just be a light session. Maybe some pad work, maybe some time on the bag. But, much to Lee's surprise, Steward immediately put him into a sparring session with Cornelius "K-9" Bundrage, who was 18-0 at the time.

Pro Record

2006

March 10	Anthony Cannon, Detroit, MI	W 6
April 22	Wassim Khalil, Mannheim, Germany	KO 5
June 16	Rodney Freeman, Memphis, TN	KO 1
Aug. 10	Carl Cockerham, Las Vegas, NV	W 6
Sept. 14	Jess Salway, Las Vegas	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
5	5	0	0	3

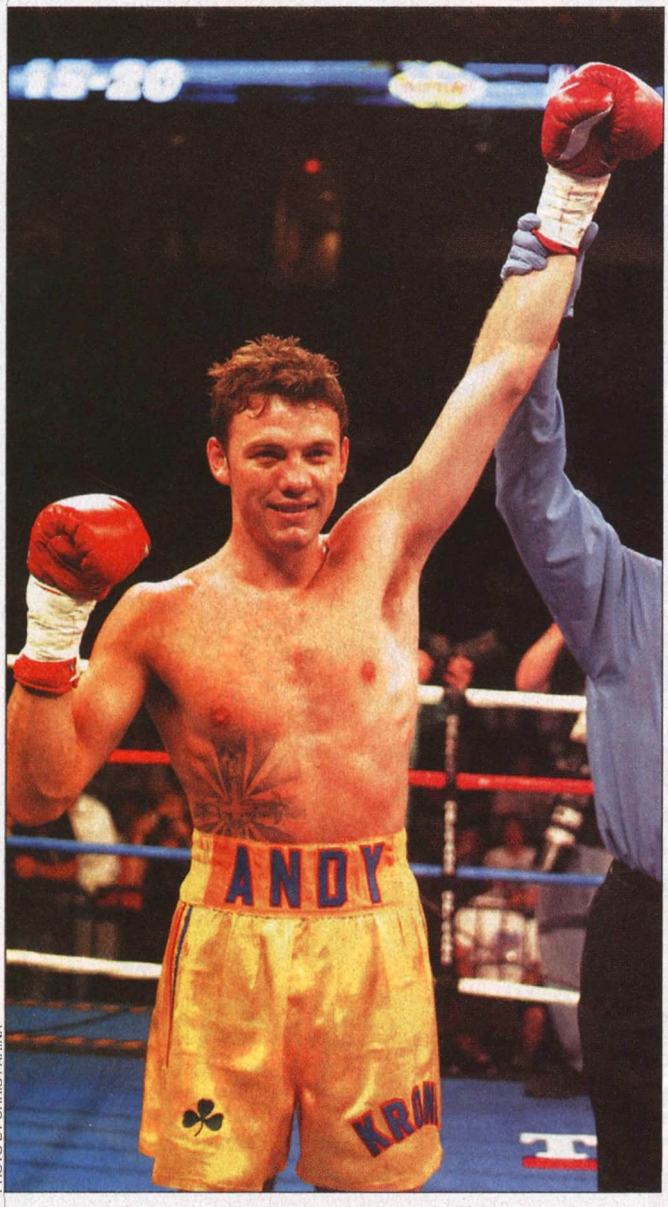


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

"Emanuel set me up, I think," recalled Lee, who had yet to turn pro. "He didn't even tell me we were going to the gym to spar. I was this white kid in the gym, and everybody was looking at me like: *What's he doing here?*"

One of the Kronk cronies, a guy known as Bam, was yelling, "Fresh meat! Fresh meat!" It's the type of environment that has beaten many fighters there before they've even stepped into the ring. Lee's not your typical fighter, though.

"I wasn't fazed," he said. "I've boxed all over Europe and all over the world. I knew I could handle myself. I just did what I always do, went in and boxed."

The courage he showed that day verified what Steward already knew: The slick Irish middleweight isn't just some ticket-selling gimmick with a Shamrock on his trunks. Lee has superstar potential.

It hasn't taken long for word to spread. At 5-0 entering a scheduled November 11 date on the Wladimir Klitschko-Calvin Brock undercard at Madison Square Garden, the 22-year-old already is generating more buzz from the American fight media than any foreign non-Olympic medalist in decades.

He has all the qualities of an elite fighter. Invisibly quick hands. Accurate. Elusive. Busy. Strong. "He has great, phenomenal potential," Steward said of the 6'2" southpaw. "He comes out and takes control right away. Some guys want to play it safe for three or four rounds before they do something. Andy's not that way. He's a fighter."

Steward first became aware of Lee four years ago, back when he was the national director of coaching for USA Boxing. At the 2002 World Junior Championships in Cuba, Lee stunned top-rated U.S. amateur Jesus Gonzalez in the semifinals en route to the silver. "I said, 'Ireland doesn't have any good amateur fighters.'" Steward recalled.

(Continued on Page 90)

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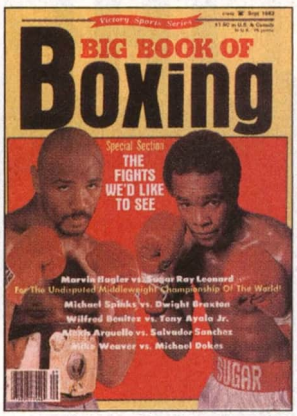

Tunney, lightweights, Pep-Pedroza dream fight.

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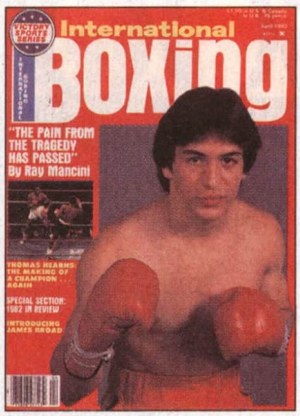

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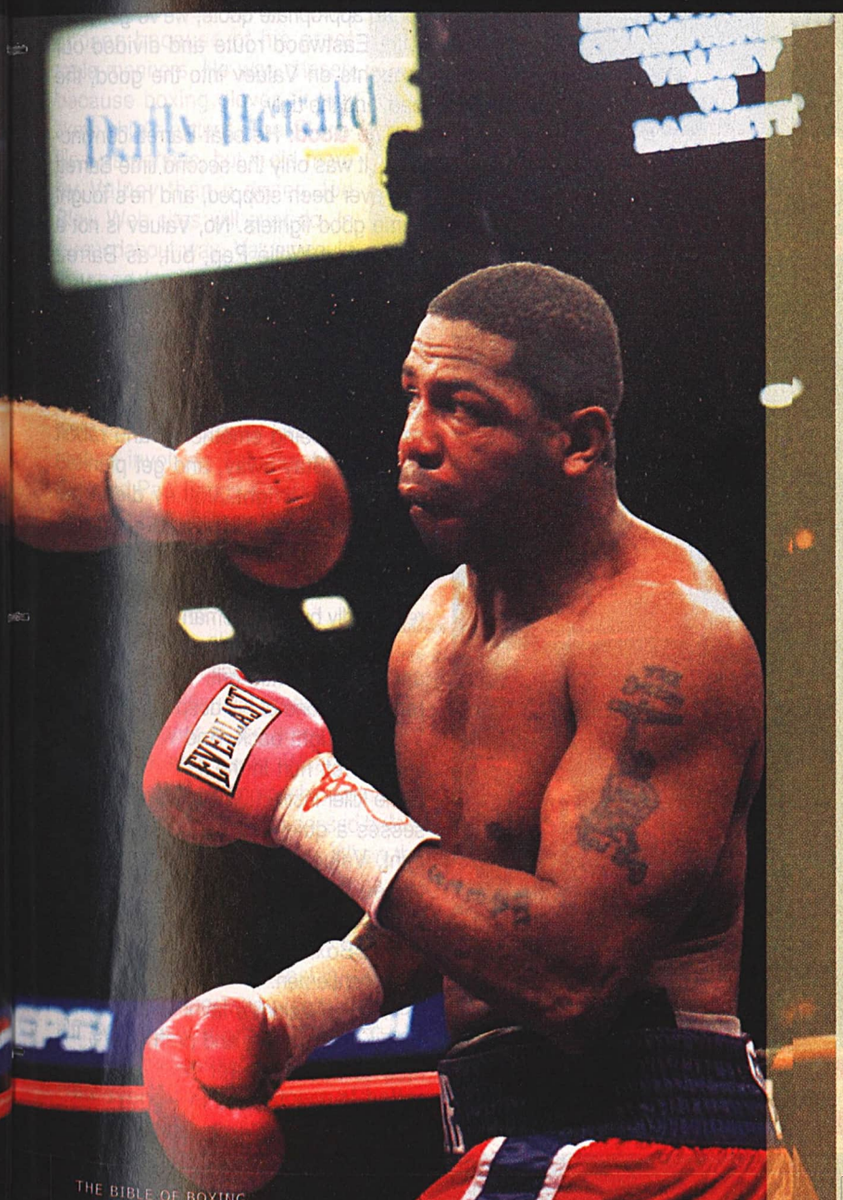
NICOLAY VALUEV: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

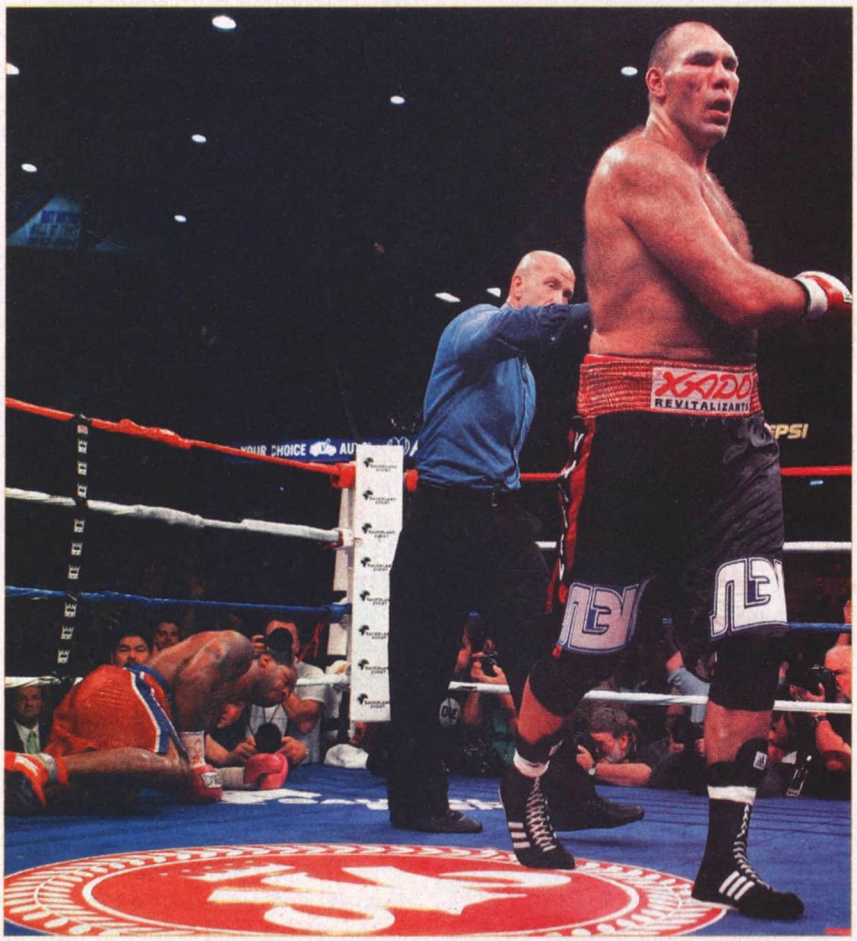
Nicolay Valuev wasn't exactly a washout, nor could his 11th-round TKO victory over Monte Barrett be considered a raging success. After the fight, the defeated Barrett said, "Valuev passed the test."



By Don Stradley
PHOTOS BY JONATHAN DANIEL/ BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

That Nicolay Valuev was not jeered during his October bout with Monte Barrett must have been as rewarding as the TKO victory he registered in the 11th round. The fight, as it was described by one reporter, "was like watching a bear maul a flailing camper."

Valuev had fought in America before, but only undercard fights in Atlantic City. Now he was main-eventing on HBO and had Don King as his co-promoter. Aside from a heated first round, the action consisted of Barrett hurling himself at Valuev, while the Russian bided his time and swatted at him. Nonetheless, the crowd at Chicago's Allstate Arena seemed amused by the sloppy action, and Valuev's 100-pound weight advantage was too much for Barrett to handle. By the 11th, Barrett was so tired he could barely stand without leaning on the ropes. Sensing a dramatic finish, the seven-footer cornered Barrett and landed a slicing overhand right. Barrett fell. He was on his feet at the count of five, but went down again moments later. Barrett was saved from more punishment when his trainer, James Basheer, climbed through the ropes and put his arms around him, causing referee John O'Brien to wave the



There were a few positives in Valuev's first main event victory in the United States. For one, he showed decent stamina in beating Barrett convincingly (above). Valuev also became the second fighter to ever stop the valiant Barrett (below), who reportedly received a call from the hulking Russian the day after the fight to see if he was okay.

action over at 2:17 of the 11th. Barrett did not protest.

After the fight, Barrett said, "Valuev passed the test." If the test was to see how Valuev would do against a 35-year-old journeyman, then we guess Valuev jumped to the head of the class. But, generally, the reviews have been mixed. If Valuev, 45-0 (33), can be seen as a big-budget blockbuster with a lot of hype behind him, his effort in Chicago has to be considered a disappointment. In fact, the fight didn't get as much coverage as it could have because a major boxing show was going on in Las Vegas on the same night. But rather than dismiss Valuev outright, or rifle through our tattered copies of *The Harder They Fall* for an appropriate quote, we've gone the Clint Eastwood route and divided our thoughts on Valuev into the good, the bad, and the ugly.

The Good: He beat Barrett convincingly. It was only the second time Barrett has ever been stopped, and he's fought some good fighters. No, Valuev is not a seven-foot Willie Pep, but, as Barrett said, "He's not just another big guy. He's a pretty good boxer." Barrett, 31-5 (17), said it was difficult to find the range against such a big man. Get too close, and your only choice is to punch upward as you're being smothered and rabbit punched. Stay away, and get plunked with Valuev's right. Valuev didn't jab much, but he showed a pretty good right hand throughout the fight. The accumulative effect must be like being tapped repeatedly by a policeman's truncheon.

Valuev also demonstrated durability and maybe a little grit. Whenever Barrett landed one of his desperation shots, Valuev fought back. And when Valuev had Barrett hurt in the 11th, he showed some killer instinct. The big lug also possesses a quiet dignity. Days after the fight, Valuev reportedly called Barrett to see if he was all right and to wish him luck in the future. It was a nice touch. Boxing can always use a few more gentlemen.

Also in Valuev's favor is that in this era of golden boys and pretty boys, it's nice to see a fighter who looks the way fighters looked in Popeye cartoons. Some of us appreciate that. (Note

to Nicolay: Stop wearing the little baseball cap after fights. It made you look like a Ringling Bros. performer; all you needed was a tricycle.) And let's face it, the sheer size of the guy is going to win him some fights. We shouldn't hold that against him. Plenty of average fighters have had good careers with nothing more than a good chin or an awkward style. Valuev's size is a weapon, just as George Chuvalo's imperviousness to pain was a weapon.

Sports Illustrated and *Rolling Stone* have already featured Valuev's hulking visage within their pages. Trust us, he wasn't chosen because of his great table manners. He was chosen because boxing gloves fit him like a child's mittens. The *SI* profile was generic, but it did more for Valuev than a dozen Joe Blow Web sites will ever do. In a roundabout way, Valuev could be good for boxing in that he might attract non-fans who will then be exposed to better stuff. For instance, the folks who tuned in to see Valuev-Barrett were treated to a great HBO co-feature involving Tomasz Adamek and Paul Briggs. Check with us in a few years and we'll bet there are some fans that came to the sport because they were curious about Valuev.

Valuev may also serve boxing in a more prosaic way. Giant heavyweights usually create an uproar just prior to the emergence of a real heavyweight savior. When big Jess Willard took the championship from Jack Johnson, only a few years passed before the arrival of Jack Dempsey. When the gigantic Primo Carnera won the championship in 1932, Joe Louis was on the verge of turning pro. Gerry Cooney never won the championship, but the 6'7" Long Islander was a sensation during the years just prior to Mike Tyson's debut. Coincidence? Are giant heavyweights actually harbingers of better things to come?

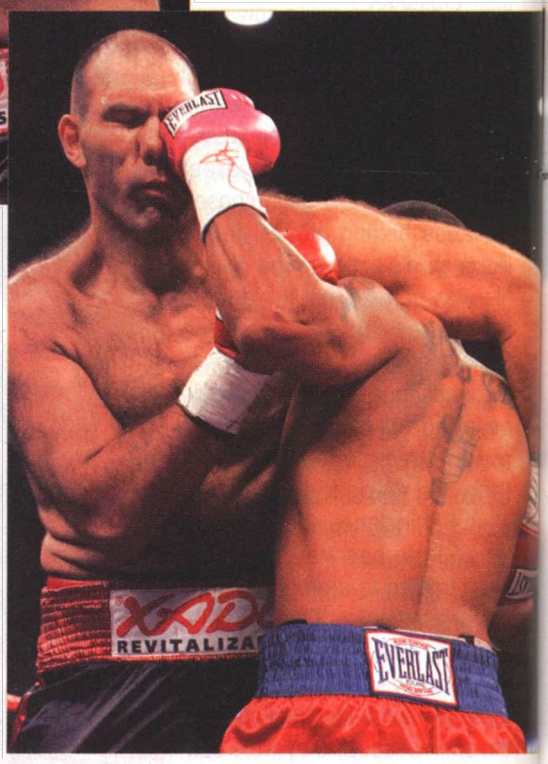
Valuev didn't jab much, but he did show some determination in fighting back every time Barrett would mount an assault.

In mythology and folklore, giants often appear during times of chaos. Of course, some giants turn out to be friendly chaps, but, generally, they're bad news. Eventually, they're exposed as weak and a little dumb. Once the giants are banished, all is well again in the village.

In boxing terms, Willard, Carnera, and Cooney all peaked when the sport was in a state of chaos: Jack Johnson's stormy reign was running on fumes when Willard came along; Dempsey's retirement and the stock market crash of '29 hurt boxing, but Carnera could draw big crowds; Cooney's meteoric rise coincided with the retirement of Muhammad Ali and the early days of fragmented titles.

Could history be repeating itself with Valuev? After all, this era may be the most chaotic in the annals of boxing. Maybe a new boxing hero is on the horizon, and Valuev is simply marking time for us. But, in the meantime, we'll have to deal with ...

The Bad: Some people will never like Valuev. They'll wonder why he doesn't



Regardless of what Valuev does, he may never gain widespread fan appeal in the U.S., simply because he's John Ruiz in a bigger package (left). Valuev mauled Barrett (below) much the same way Ruiz mauls his opponents.

have knockout power, not understanding that a seven-footer rarely gets good leverage on a punch, or that he will never be fast enough to land the sort of blinding punch that takes a man out. With Valuev, we're in for a lot of long-distance fights that are difficult to score. That's a hard sell, even if you like giants.

It's also unfortunate that after 10 years as a pro, Valuev still looks like he's reading cue cards. It's ironic that Valuev came into prominence by beating John Ruiz, because he's basically another version of Ruiz. He's difficult to beat, but he'll never be spectacular.

Then there's his personality. Americans like our athletes to be tattooed morons with a *Maxim* model on each arm. A deadpan Russian is not a natural fit with the frat boy/weekend jock mentality of contemporary sports programming. The Klitschkos were willing to poke fun at themselves, but you can forget about Valuev doing the same. Valuev played along with Don King's tacky p.r. tour, but he was reportedly bored out of his mind for most of it, and considered the whole process nothing more than inane chatter. He's absolutely right. Unfortunately, America is the land of hype. Valuev may end up nixing America in favor of more European fights. And for how much longer will King and Valuev's German promoter, Wilfried Sauerland, work in harmony?

We're not sure that Valuev will be an attraction in America—many of the 13,482 at the Allstate Arena were Polish fans on hand to see Adamek. HBO can't be itching to sign Valuev long term; the next time we see Valuev will probably be on a Don King pay-per-view show. Paying 50 bucks to see Valuev is a bad thing.

King may also dig up a few more journeymen for Valuev so that the Russian can remain undefeated. Would it surprise you to see Valuev fight Andrew Golota? King may even dredge up the old Rocky Marciano chase—Valuev needs only five fights to break Marciano's undefeated record, a sure indication that statistics mean nothing in boxing. This is bad stuff. And then there's ...

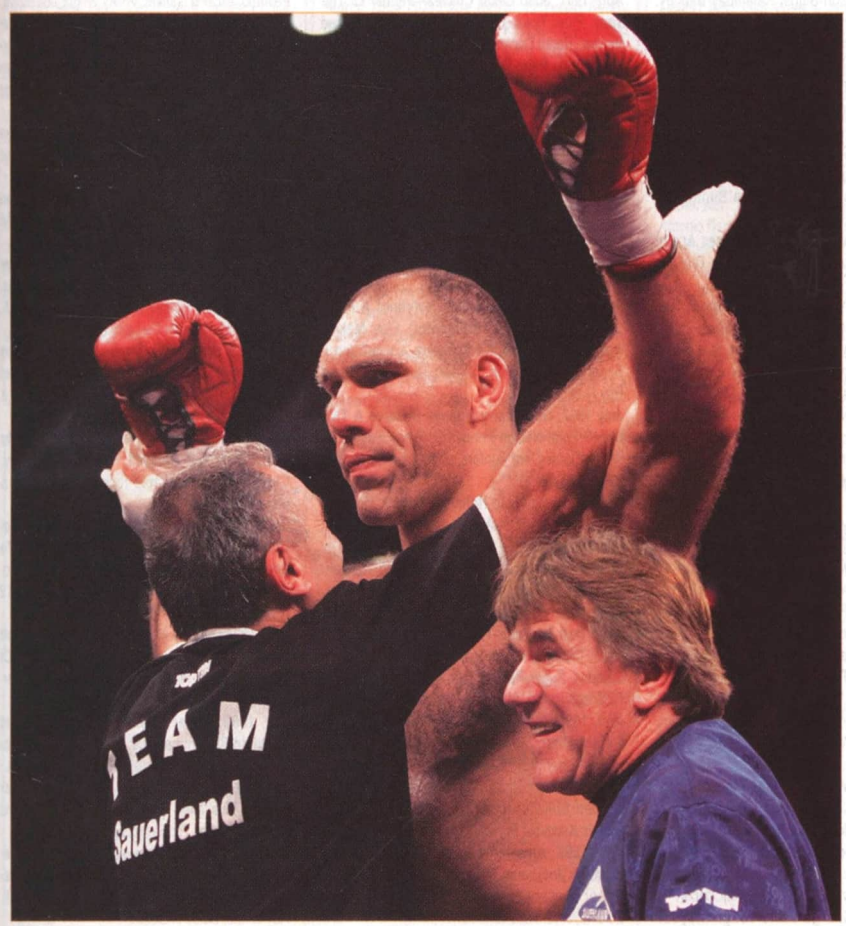
The Ugly: Regarding Valuev, there's an awful lot of ugly. And we're not just talking back hair.

Despite his reluctance to be marketed as such, Valuev is a giant. He's not simply a large athlete, like Lennox Lewis or the Klitschko brothers; he's a giant. His grandmother was referenced in a recent press release: "She spoke of an Asiatic tribe called the Tartars (derived from Tarturus, the Greek god of the underworld), who had once conquered Russia and spread terror throughout most of Europe. She said her grandfather was "a giant of a man called Vasily," and a direct descendant of this warrior race. "Nicolay was the product of this gene pool."

Nice try, Grandma, but Valuev is more a glandular case than a descendant of Tarturus. There has been much discussion about the possibility that Valuev has the same disorders that troubled former wrestling star Andre the Giant and Matthew McGory, the late actor who appeared on the Howard Stern show as Bigfoot. The maladies are Acromegaly and pituitary gigantism. They eventually cause spine and joint problems, impaired vision, and heart failure. The signs of it are seen in

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Valuev may have worn a smile when he was with King, but the Russian heavyweight titlist was seething at the way King portrayed Valuev to the public and the press.



It has been speculated that Valuev suffers from Acromegaly and pituitary gigantism. Signs are usually seen in Valuev's massive jaw and the shelf-like ridge over his eyes.

Valuev's massive jaw and the shelf-like ridge over his eyes. Basically, an Acromegalic's bones won't stop growing. It's a slow-moving disease, and surgery and drugs can treat it. The average lifespan for an Acromegalic is between 36 and 46. Valuev is 33.

We'll assume Valuev and his camp are on top of his health concerns. Or maybe he's aware of his ailments and plans to continue fighting as long as his body holds up. Don King, who hasn't had as much fun hyping a heavyweight since Tyson got out of prison, has already put his own spin on things.

"Americans should appreciate that when a late, great President named Ronald Reagan said, 'Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall,' this is the aftermath," King said during a Manhattan press conference. "Now the Russians are aspiring to bigness ... because that wall was torn down." King doesn't care if Valuev's size comes from genetics, a mythical bloodline, or a glandular disorder. When selling snake oil, it's sometimes easier to move it in gallons than quarts. But King is fine no matter what happens to Valuev. If Valuev's next opponent gives him a Joe Louis-style beating, King will simply step over his huge body and bellow, "All hail the giant-slayer!"

Life is not easy for giants. They face an endless series of uncomfortable plane rides, clothing that doesn't fit, and shower stalls that aren't big enough. When they enter sports, especially boxing, they're met with cynicism. If he's anything less than a destroyer, he's branded a stiff. We can't wait to yell "Timber" as he falls.

Valuev may be limited, but it's unfair to call him a stiff. He's a working-class fighter, no different than Ruiz, Ricardo Mayorga, or Carlos Baldomir. Like them, he spent a lot of years fighting for small paychecks. Now he's making the best of an opportunity. The fact that he's as big as a house shouldn't color our feelings about him, but it will. And that's pretty ugly of us. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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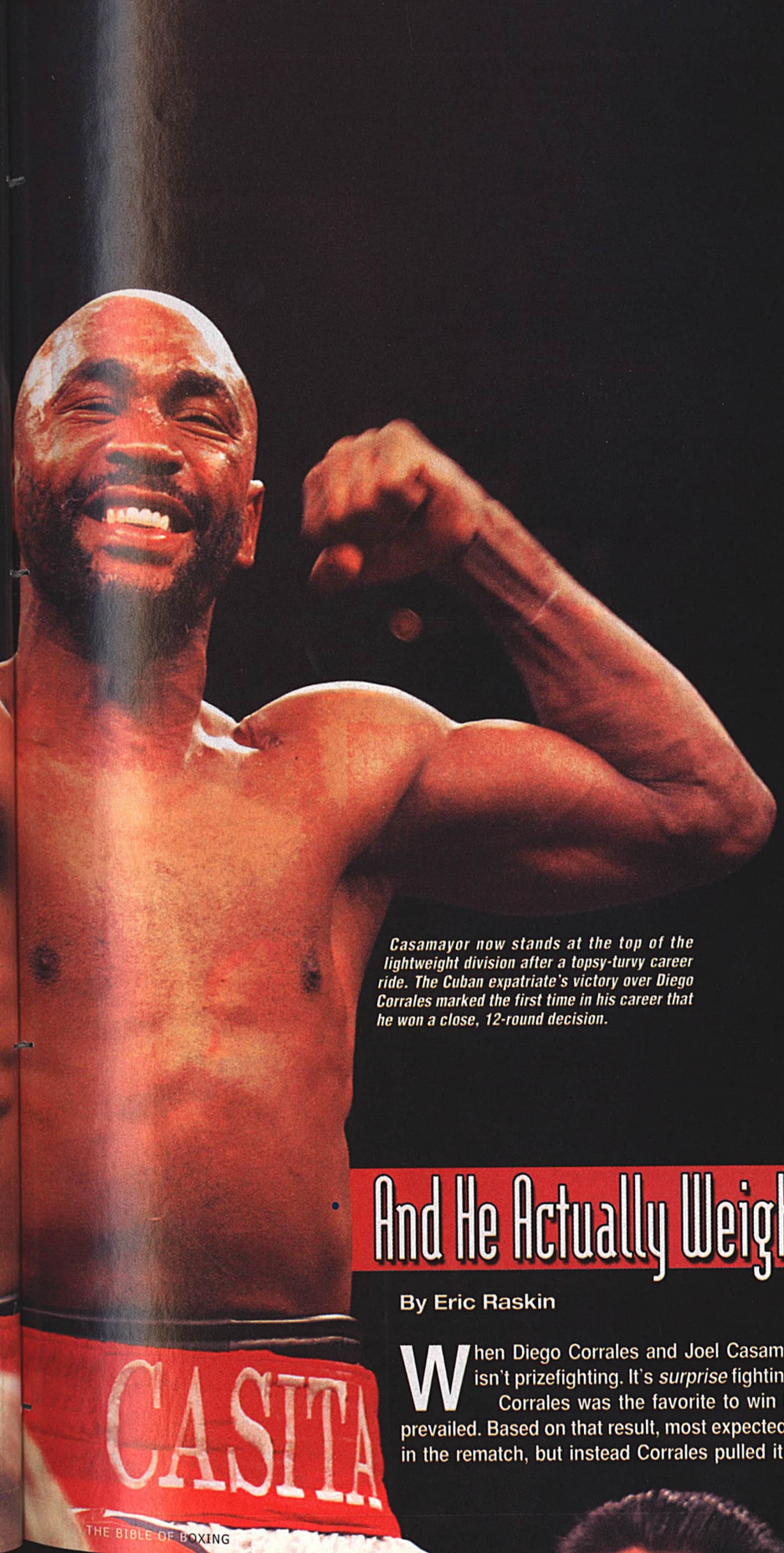
CASAMAYOR SCALES TO THE TOP

There's A New Lightweight Champ ...

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO SHOWTIME



Casamayor now stands at the top of the lightweight division after a topsy-turvy career ride. The Cuban expatriate's victory over Diego Corrales marked the first time in his career that he won a close, 12-round decision.

And He Actually Weighs 135 Pounds!

By Eric Raskin

When Diego Corrales and Joel Casamayor get in the ring together, it isn't prizefighting. It's *surprise* fighting.

Corrales was the favorite to win their first fight, but Casamayor prevailed. Based on that result, most expected Casamayor to come out on top in the rematch, but instead Corrales pulled it out. And going into the rubber

It didn't matter to Casamayor that Corrales weighed in at 139½ pounds; Casamayor was still going to go after him. "... he could've shown up at 200 pounds, and we would've fought," Casamayor said. "This guy's been running from me for three years, and I didn't want to let him get off the hook that easy."

PHOTO BY TOM CASION/SHOWTIME

match, the following three statements were all true: No crowd had ever booed the action in a Casamayor-Corrales fight; Casamayor had never won a close decision in a 12-rounder; and Corrales had every right to rip into Jose Luis Castillo for disrespecting the sport of boxing by failing to make weight for major fights. On October 6, the last of those three statements became false, and the next night, the other two also ceased to be true.

Casamayor-Corrales III was full of unexpected, perhaps even ironic developments, from the weigh-in to the in-ring action to the reading of the judges' cards. Nothing went the way history said it should. Everything was a surprise.

And here's the ultimate surprise to top it off: Castillo, Corrales, and Acelino Freitas, all of whom own wins over Casamayor, are gone from the 135-pound division, and "El Cepillo" is the last man standing and the lightweight champion of the world.

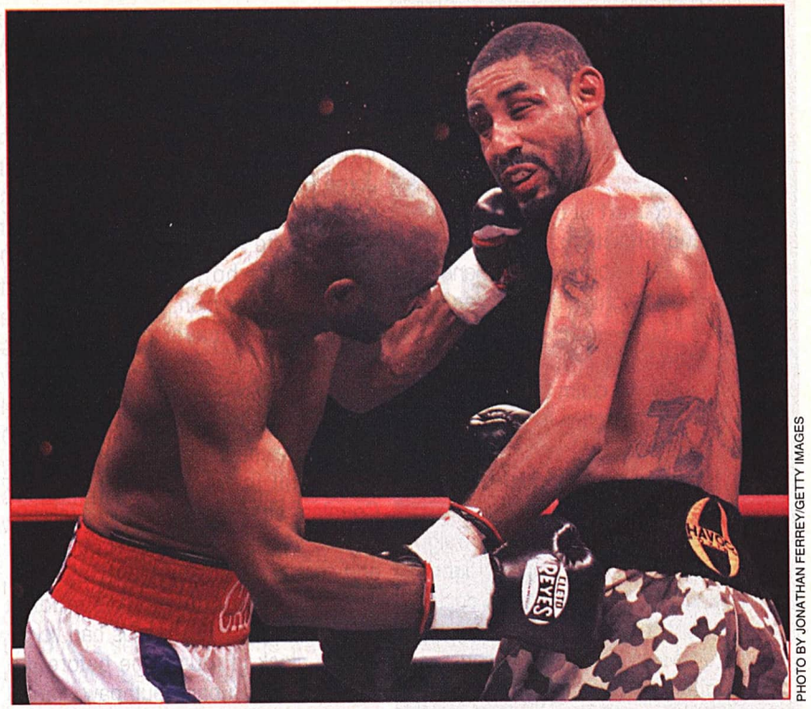
"It was an amazing feeling to finally see a big fight go my way," Casamayor, 35, told THE RING, through interpreter and manager Luis DeCubas, a few days after the split decision victory over Corrales.

"To me and a lot of my fans, I'm easily 38-0, not 34-3-1. But everyone makes mistakes, and I can't blame any judges or referees for their past mistakes, everyone has their own opinion. But it does feel great to finally win one."

Casamayor is referring to his fights with the aforementioned trio of standout lightweights who've left the division, Castillo, Corrales, and the newly retired Freitas. Castillo's win over Casamayor came by split decision. Corrales' victory, in the second of their three fights, also came by split decision. And Freitas' came by scores of 114-112 on all three scorecards in a fight in which Casamayor had controversial point deductions and knockdown rulings go against him.

In his biggest fights, Casamayor just couldn't buy a break. And it looked like another bad break was coming his way when, at the weigh-in for the rubber match, Corrales stepped on the scale at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas at 139½ pounds on his first try. Two hours later, he'd only shed eight ounces. It was tremendously ironic considering that Corrales had seen scheduled opponent Castillo fail to make weight for two fights in a row and had been harshly critical of Castillo for being unprofessional and dishonest. Now it was Corrales missing by almost a full weight class, and it was up to Casamayor to make a tough decision: Go through with the fight, as Corrales did the first time Castillo came in heavy, and take his chances against a bigger, stronger man; or cancel the fight, as Corrales did in May '06, sacrificing his payday and denying the fans entertainment. Casamayor-Corrales III had turned into Lightweight Weight Gate III, and the pressure was on the innocent party to decide the fight's fate.

"I was very disappointed, it was a disrespect to the Las Vegas commission, to



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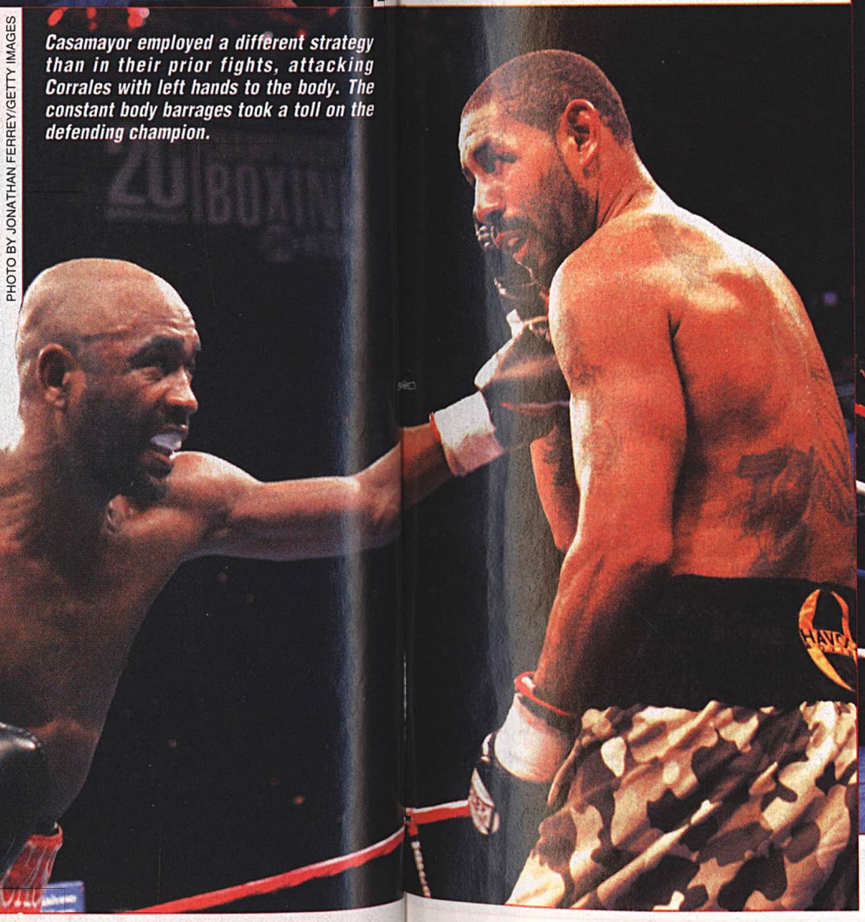
Casamayor increased the pressure on Corrales in the third, breaking open what had been a mundane fight until that point with a left to the jaw. It's a punch that certainly caught Corrales by surprise.



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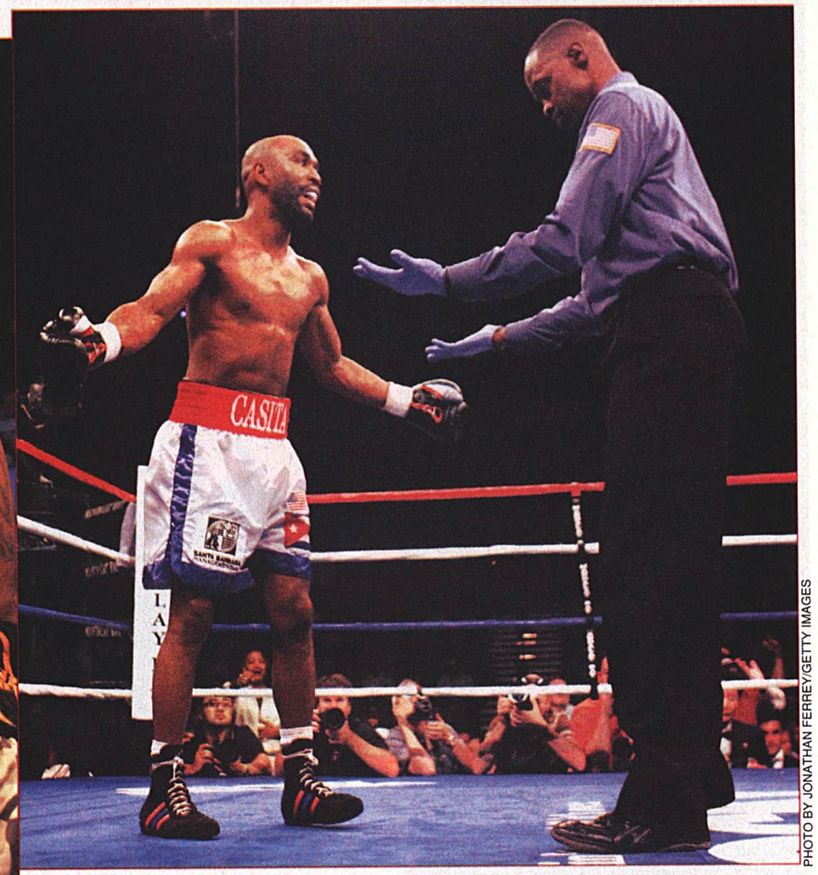
Casamayor employed a different strategy than in their prior fights, attacking Corrales with left hands to the body. The constant body barrages took a toll on the defending champion.



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Casamayor tried pleading his case to referee Kenny Bayless in the fifth round that the tumble he took was the result of a push, not a punch. Bayless wasn't buying it, and all three official scorecards awarded Corrales a 10-8 round.

the sport of boxing, and to me myself," Casamayor said. "But to be honest, he could've shown up at 200 pounds, and we would've fought. This guy's been running from me for three years, and I didn't want to let him get off the hook that easy. I couldn't let down the sport of boxing and Showtime, both of which were still hurting from what happened in the last mega-fight with Corrales and Castillo."

The good news for Casamayor was that he could still claim THE RING lightweight championship with a victory. Though the staff of this magazine doesn't agree with the alphabet groups about much, they do agree that, with Corrales acknowledging after the weigh-in that he could never possibly fight at 135 pounds again, it was right to declare the title vacant and allow Casamayor to claim it if he won the fight. The sanctioning bodies always apply this policy (recent examples of the man who makes weight claiming the belt include Ricardo Lopez-Rosendo Alvarez II, Derrick Gainer-Fred Norwood, and, just three weeks earlier, Joan Guzman-Jorge Barrios), and, though THE RING is opposed to stripping fighters of titles, it seems quite fair to give the title to a challenger who makes weight and defeats the champion.

So all Casamayor had to do was march out there and defeat one of the most versatile warriors of recent vintage, "Chico" Corrales. The strategy involved lots of movement (it's never advisable to stand still in front of the powerful Corrales) and lots of bodywork (always a good idea against a lanky opponent, and especially smart when that opponent weakened himself shedding weight). Only a few seconds had ticked off the clock in round one before the Miami-based Cuban southpaw started landing right jabs and straight left hands to Corrales' stomach.

"The bodyshots were very important. Not only did it slow him down, but it also scored well with the judges," Casamayor reflected. "Some people don't understand the importance of bodywork. I started hitting him early with left hands to the body and heard him groan *'ooh, oh.'* He didn't like it, so I kept going down there. I knew I was getting to him. Bodypunching is an old-school art."

Almost as old-school, in fact, as the timeless tradition of booing when the action is something less than ferocious. The impatient crowd in Las Vegas started voicing its displeasure with about 20 seconds remaining in a cautious, tactical opening round, and midway through the second, with Casamayor moving about the ring considerably, the booing started up again. It was an unfamiliar sound for fights between these rivals. Thankfully,

Weighing Boxing Down

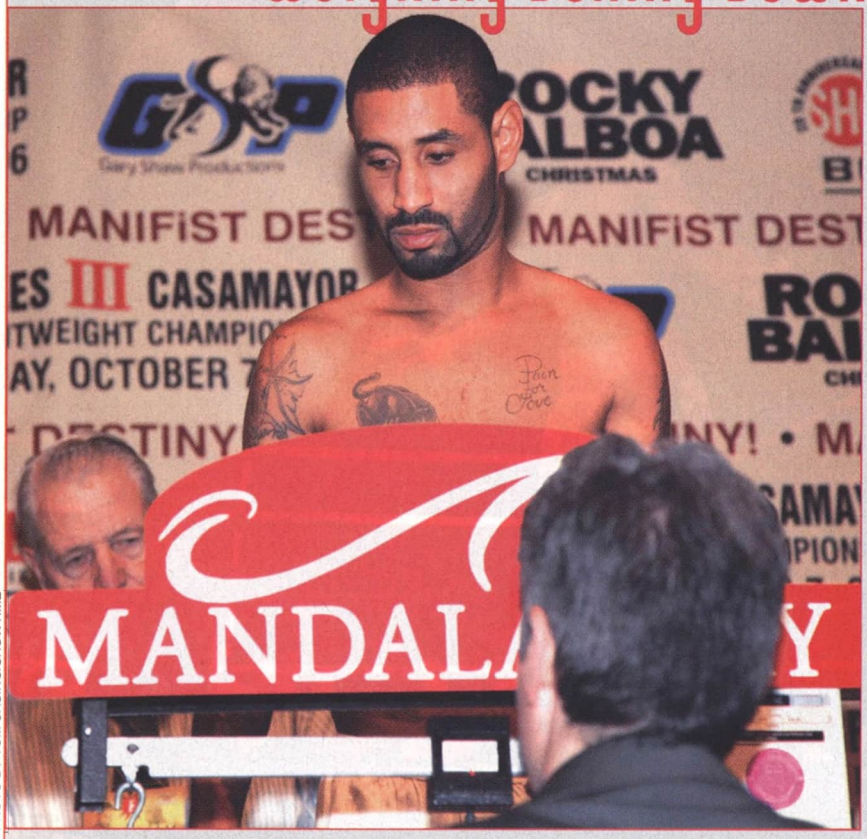


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

It was ironic that Corrales came in overweight for his third bout against Casamayor. It was Corrales who railed against Jose Luis Castillo for coming in overweight and forcing the cancellation of their third fight.

For more than three days, Diego Corrales didn't eat a meal. On Monday, October 2, he had a small portion of tuna and a few bites of salad. According to trainer Joe Goossen, that was his final meal before Friday, October 6—unless you count sucking on ice chips as a meal. And even after all that, he missed making weight by four pounds. Something is very wrong with this picture.

When boxing stops being about abusing your opponent and starts being about abusing yourself to make a weight that's beyond unnatural, then clearly something needs to change. When a boxer says, "I was almost at the point of passing out ... I pretty much killed myself to be here," then clearly something needs to change. Those were Corrales' words, but they could also have been Jose Luis Castillo's words prior to the cancellation of his third fight with Corrales, and they could have been Jorge Arce's words after he was seen lying down almost lifelessly following a weigh-in for a 108-pound title defense a few years back.

not much more of it was heard thereafter, as Casamayor picked up the pace in the third, complementing his two-fisted body attack with a left to the jaw, a left-right combination, and a nifty pull-counter left. The fourth was a closer round, with both men getting good work done—Casamayor with the straight left, Corrales with the left hook.

In the fifth, however, it was "here we go again" for Casamayor, as another one of those controversial officiating calls went against him. Corrales missed with a left hook, the punch cuffed around the back of the Cuban's head, the fighters' feet tangled, and the challenger was pulled to the canvas. When ref Kenny Bayless picked up the count, Casamayor screamed at him in disbelief. On all three official scorecards, Corrales was awarded a 10-8 round.

To call Casamayor a clean fighter would be like calling Nicolay Valuev a speedster, and true to form, El Cepillo retaliated at the start of round six, initiating what sure looked like an intentional clash of heads (and getting away with only a warning). Casamayor eased off on the rough stuff after that but remained angry and determined, boxing beautifully throughout the round and taunting Corrales at the bell. Corrales' jab paved the way for a comeback round in the seventh, and the eighth, ninth, and 10th were all toss-up rounds. Casamayor clearly won round 11 on the strength of a pair of lefts that snapped Chico's head back, but Corrales, 40-4 (33), answered in the 12th with a beautiful straight right. Once again, a Casamayor fight was going to the cards with the outcome uncertain.

The fifth-round knockdown call made a big difference on Jerry Roth's card, putting Corrales up 114-113. Had the others seen it the same way, this might have been Casamayor's tough-

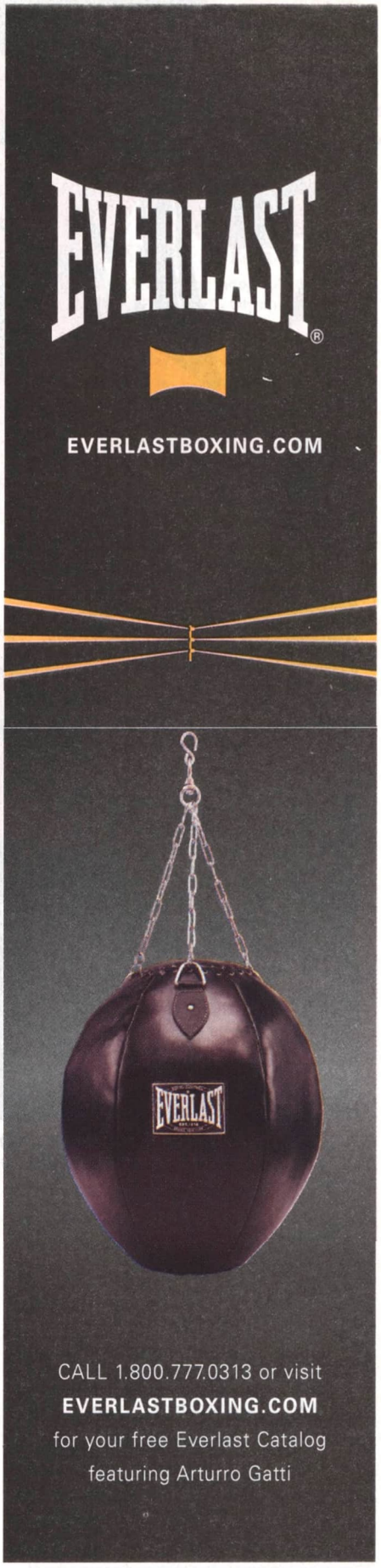
Boxers aren't just working hard to make weight these days; they're inflicting torture upon themselves. They're attempting to fight at weights their bodies can't boil down to, and they're doing it because of the cushion created by day-before-the-fight weigh-ins. Starving yourself for a week is a realistic option to some fighters because they'll then have a full 24 hours (sometimes, more like 28 or 30 hours) to rehydrate and regain their strength. But it's clear now that the day-before weigh-in system doesn't work. It's not improving fighter safety; it's prompting fighters to do greater damage to themselves and, as we've seen recently, it's led to fighters missing making weight by astonishing margins.

"The reason these boxers are not making weight is that they are not competing at a natural weight—not even close," Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission Executive Director Greg Sirb wrote in a letter to Association of Boxing Commission members the week after Casamayor-Corrales III. "Corrales nor Castillo are *not* lightweights, but because we as commissions allow this weigh-in the day before an event, these boxers have a false sense of security that they can indeed starve themselves because they think they can adequately replenish with the 24 hours before the fight ... My thoughts are that if we go back to the day-of weigh-in (as is now the case for all collegiate wrestlers—the NCAA banned the idea of day-before weigh-ins), boxers such as Corrales and Castillo will know there will be no chance of making that weight on the day of the fight while also being physically ready to fight, so they would then move up to 140 pounds, which is where they belong.

"The day-before weigh-in has *failed*—it is time to change!!!"

Amen, Greg. Boxers who attempt to gain an advantage by fighting at weights their bodies will barely allow are cheating themselves, cheating their opponents, and cheating the fans. By going back to day-of-the-fight weigh-ins, we might actually see lightweights fighting lightweights, welterweights fighting welterweights, and ice chips where they belong—in the bucket, keeping the water bottles cold.

—E.R.



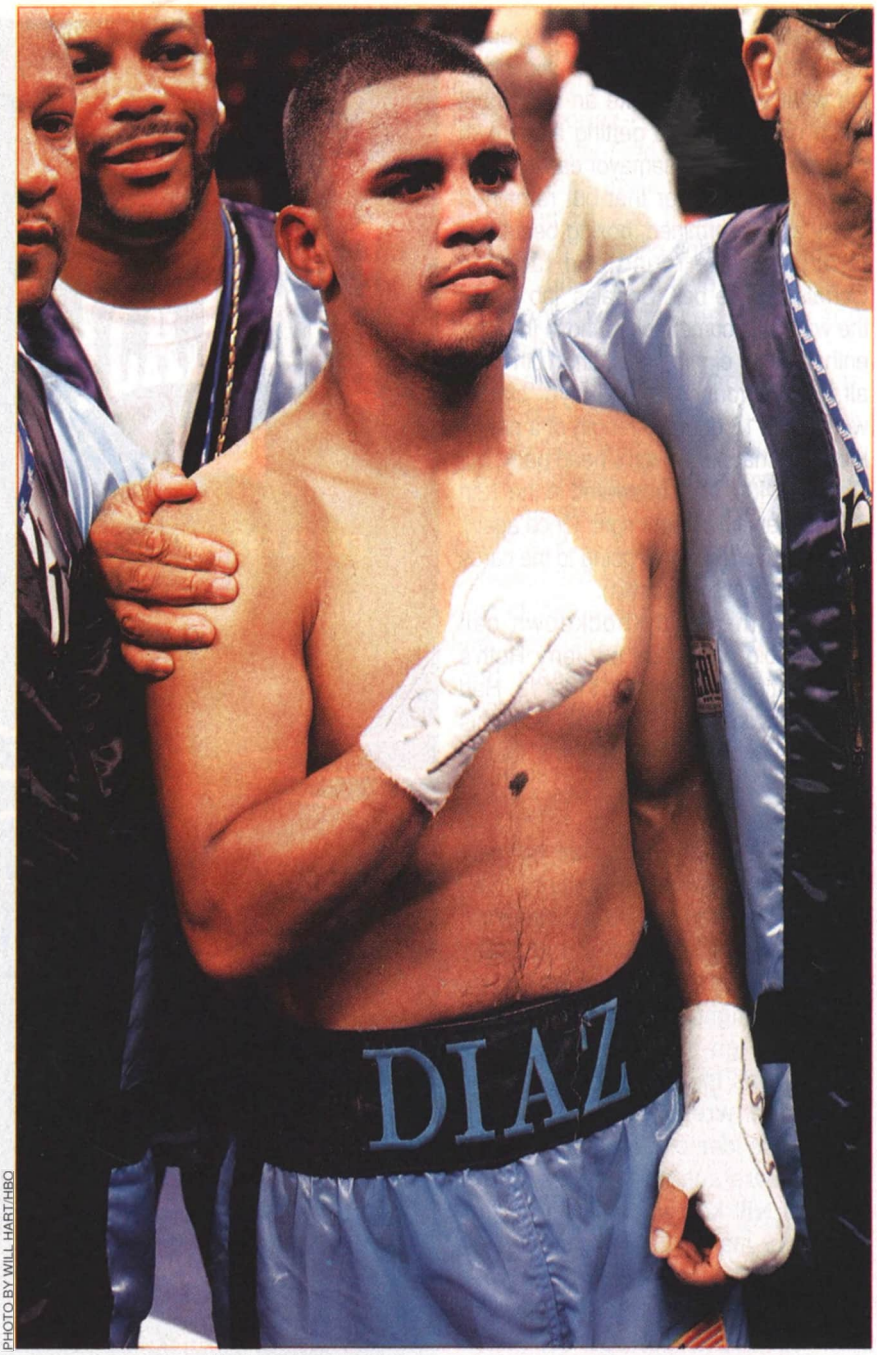


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Now that he's world lightweight champion, Casamayor is eyeing up a few lightweight fights that could mean lucrative paydays ahead. One certainly high on Casamayor's wish list is WBA lightweight titlist Juan Diaz.

est loss yet to digest. But Nobuaki Uratani had Casamayor up 115-112, and Adalaide Byrd scored it 116-111, making the Cuban a split decision winner. THE RING had Casamayor on top 115-113, and the magazine's championship belt was his.

"It means everything in the world to me," Casamayor, 34-3-1 (21), said of the lightweight belt that his co-promoter and close friend, Roberto Duran, once wore. "There are several champions in this division, but only one RING champion, and that's Joel Casamayor. The only way you can take it from me is in my office, the squared circle."

So who are the contenders with whom Casamayor might soon find himself sharing office space? There will be no more fights with Castillo or Corrales—at least not at this weight, with this championship on the line. A rematch with Freitas would be a natural, but just a couple of days before Casamayor-Corrales III, "Popo" surprisingly announced his retirement at age 31.

"I feel like he ran into retirement because he knew I was coming after him after I was done with Corrales," Casamayor said. "I'd love for him to come back, I owe him a butt whooping. But his decision's made. It could be the smartest move of his life."

Assuming Freitas is indeed done with the sport, that means Casamayor's next challenge will come from someone he hasn't faced before. In the lightweight division, there are credible challengers who might make for exciting fights—Juan Diaz, Julio Diaz, and Jesus Chavez are the leading contenders, and David Diaz is the alphabet mandatory to Casamayor—but there are no marquee names. If you're looking for those household names, they all reside five pounds to the south, in the form of Marco Antonio Barrera, Manny Pacquiao, and Erik Morales. There's one in particular among that trio whom Casamayor has his eye on.

"I'm a big-name fighter, and I've got to fight big-name guys. That means Barrera," declared the father of nine looking for money fights to help feed all those mouths. "It's the best Mexican of this era against the best Cuban of this era. It's the best fight for me and for the entire boxing world."

The best fight for Casamayor? Sure. The best fight for Barrera and for boxing? That's debatable. Barrera against the winner of Pacquiao-Morales III remains a bigger attraction, not to mention it rates to crown a true champ at 130 pounds. But after that, perhaps. You certainly couldn't go wrong with the legitimate world junior lightweight champion challenging the legitimate world lightweight champion.

Casamayor has had a pro career in two parts thus far: his rise to recognition from 1996 to 2001, and his big fights against the Corrales-Castillo-Freitas crew from '02 to '06. Now Phase III begins, with Casamayor as the lightweight king readying to take on the challenges of younger and/or smaller men. It could be the phase that determines whether or not Casamayor is a Hall of Famer.

And whereas we wouldn't have liked his chances of winning over voters rendering a debatable decision before, now nothing would surprise us. ■

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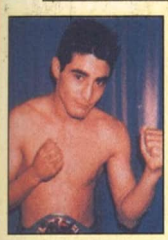

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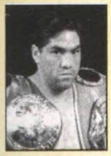

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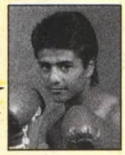

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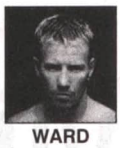

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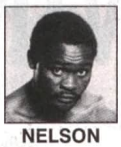

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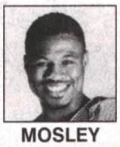

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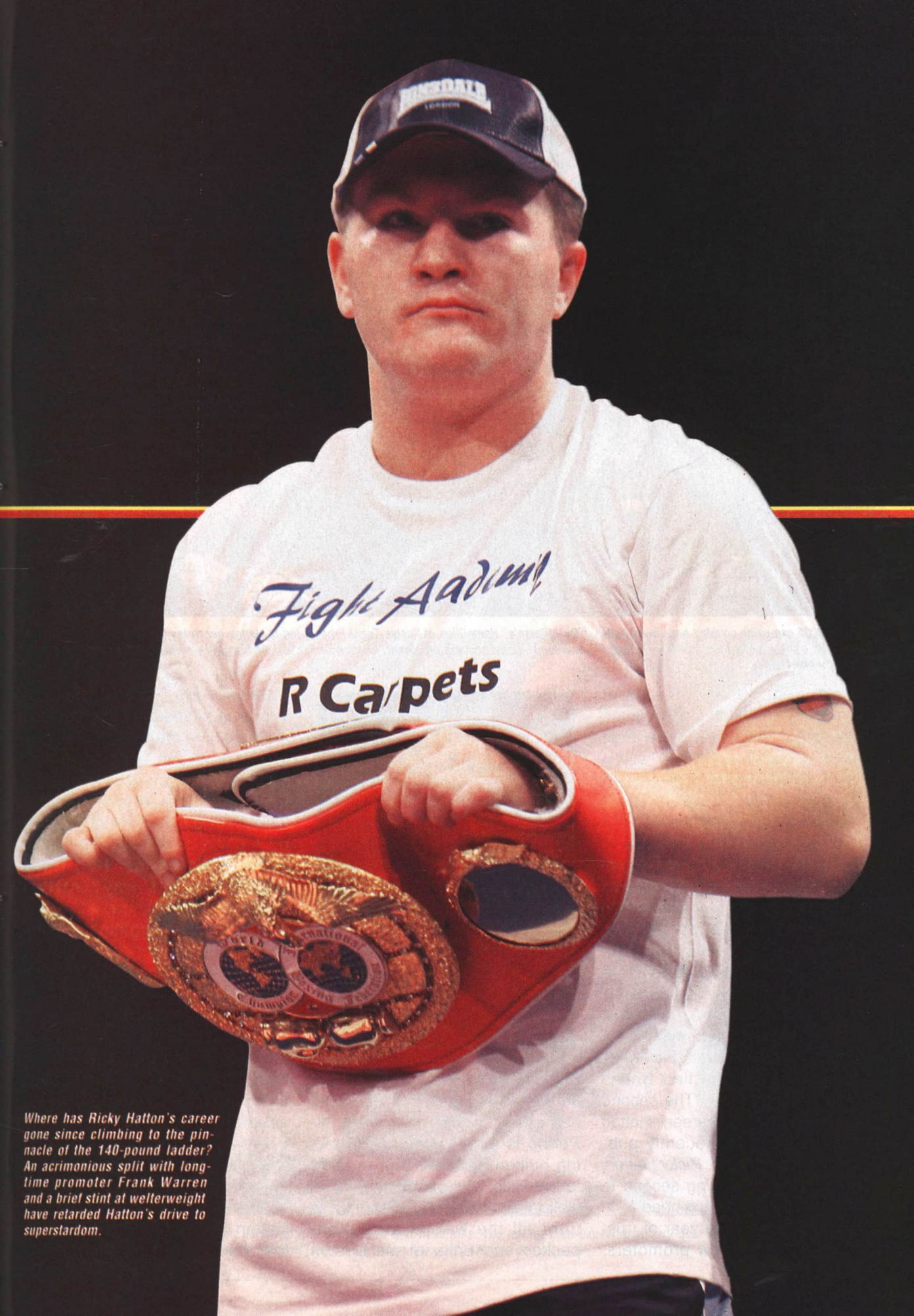
LOST & FOUND

RICKY HATTON MOVES BACK DOWN TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD

By Brian Doogan

It was the early hours of the morning inside a cauldron-like MEN Arena. Manchester, a sports citadel in the north of England, has played host to the very best: George Best and the dynasty created by Sir Matt Busby and Sir Alex Ferguson, knights and guardians of Manchester United. But on the city's roll call of sporting triumphs, Ricky Hatton's over Kostya Tszyu, when he stopped the warrior king from Australia to win the junior welterweight championship of the world, yields to very few. That morning was one of the high points for British boxing and the city in which Hatton was born and bred. In Hatton's own career, it appeared that his time had come.

He was 26 years old and the world was at his feet, certainly the world of 140-pound boxers. His defeat of Tszyu was a demolition, methodically achieved, one that many people—most people—believed was beyond him. The veteran champion had been a pound-for-pound fixture, but after 11 rounds of frenetic fighting, he was reduced to a shake of the head—barely perceptible but hugely symbolic—while he sat



Where has Ricky Hatton's career gone since climbing to the pinnacle of the 140-pound ladder? An acrimonious split with longtime promoter Frank Warren and a brief stint at welterweight have retarded Hatton's drive to superstardom.

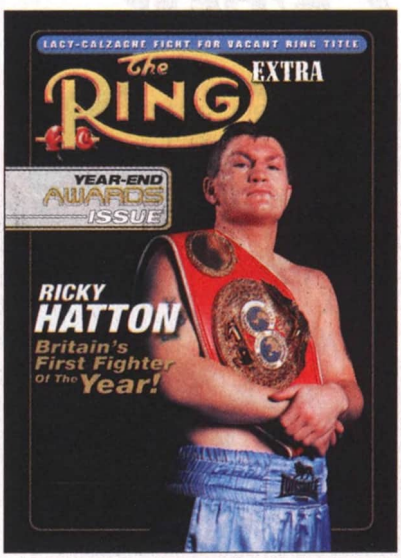
PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton's 2005 campaign couldn't have been better. "The Hitman's" demolition of Kostya Tszyu (above) led to Hatton becoming the first British fighter ever honored as THE RING's Fighter of the Year (below). "The second biggest honor in my career," Hatton said in his autobiography, "only coming second to beating Tszyu by a short head."

on his stool. What this said of Hatton was articulated best by the fallen king. "Ricky was better than me in every way," said Tszyu. "I've been boxing for 27 years, so well done, Ricky."

Few people knew then of the growing unease that had developed between Hatton and his promoter, Frank Warren, a rift that was quickly to become a chasm. When Hatton next climbed into the ring, they were in the throes of a bitter divorce through the courts. "The Hitman" knocked out Carlos Maussa, of Colombia, in the ninth round and closed 2005 memorably by receiving THE RING'S Fighter of the Year award, the first British fighter thus honored. "The second biggest honor in my career," Hatton described it in his recently published autobiography, *Ricky Hatton: My Story*, "only coming second to beating Tszyu by a short head."

But 2006 will be a year of frustration. With his new promoters,



Fight Academy, who had staged the bout with Maussa in Sheffield, he traveled to the U.S. (where Art Pellulo is working with him), having bulked up in weight, to challenge Luis Collazo for the WBA welterweight title. He was made to fight all the way in an action-packed encounter at the Boston TD Banknorth Garden, where he won a unanimous points decision to seize the belt. But a single, arresting image seemed to sum up his entire experience stateside. It was a picture taken afterward in his dressing room of Hatton sitting on a chair, alone and holding his head in his hands. Had Ricky Hatton lost his way? At that moment, only he knew.

It remains a legitimate question, though a conclusion is not quite so straightforward. Without a big fight in 2006—Hatton will not box for the rest of the year, and the contest with Collazo was one that yielded a belt, but it was far from the superfight that had been anticipated—it would be easy, apparently, to conclude that the Hatton juggernaut has lost its way. Certainly, it seemed so inside the Boston Garden. Billy Graham, his trainer, revealed that Hatton had not followed the plan they had worked on after he had

dropped Collazo in the opening seconds. Hatton concurred, suggesting that the early knockdown threw him, describing it as perhaps "the worst thing you can do. You get a bit of a rush in the head and lose your way a little bit." But the gravest error was acknowledged by Hatton himself.

"I still believe I'm a junior welterweight," he said. "This [move up in weight] was never really in the plans, but that's where the [big] fights were. Moving up, I noticed the difference. The force of the shots were very different. He hurt me several times, and I'm man enough to admit it."

Hatton, 41-0 (30), is no more a welterweight than is Nikolay Valuev, not yet anyway. Maybe if he were to step into a program that was somewhat less challenging than contesting a title in his first bout, he could grow into one. He has formidable physical strength, this we know. He also has in Kerry Kayes one of the best nutritionists and strength coaches in the business. But all evidence from the Collazo fight was pretty conclusive. Hatton is not able to impose himself to anywhere near the same degree at 147 pounds that he is able to achieve so naturally at junior welter.

"What people need to factor into the equation, too, is this: Ricky had about three or four weeks to make himself into a welterweight as, originally, he was due to face Juan Lazcano in defense of his RING light welterweight belt," emphasized his father, Ray, who is Hatton's business manager. "But Lazcano broke a finger, suddenly all bets were off and we were quickly scrambling around for another opponent. If Ricky was giving up belts at light welter, which he did [both the IBF and WBA titles], then he wanted to win a belt at welterweight in order to make it worth his while to step up, and that's how we settled on Collazo. It wasn't ideal, and Ricky wasn't helped either by the fact that he had to stop two weeks of preparation for the fight to go over to New York to appear in court (a case brought by Souleymane M'baye, who maintained that he should fight Hatton before anybody else, since he was his mandatory challenger at light welterweight in the WBA rankings). All told, instead of 12 weeks to prepare for the fight, Ricky had eight. So it wasn't ideal. In fact, it was a nightmare."

If Hatton had lost his way, however, he would have remained among the welterweights, blindly calling out Floyd Mayweather while taking more punishment from the fists of bigger men. He is not. His next fight will be his second defense of THE RING'S junior welterweight championship (masquerading as a clash for the vacant IBF

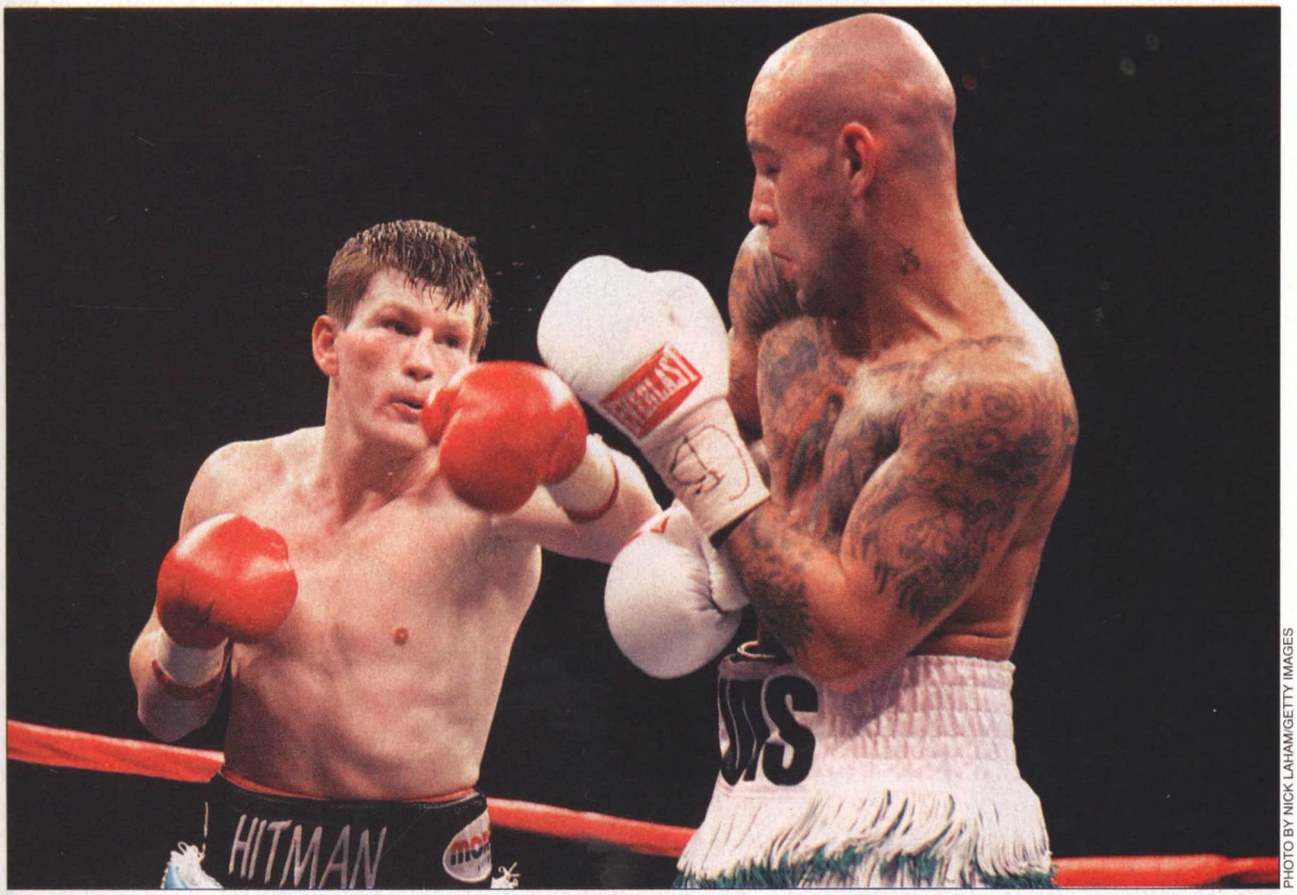


PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton's first foray as a welterweight garnered him a title belt and little else. His harder-than-expected victory over WBA titlist Luis Collazo also proved that Hatton's punch was more punishing at junior welter than it was at 147.

light welterweight title), on January 13 in Atlanta, against Colombia's Juan Urango (*see "Looking Ahead," page 48*). Neither the venue nor the opponent inspires, but the intention is for Hatton to have three bouts on HBO next year, and the plan is for the second of these to be against Mexico's Jose Luis Castillo.

"The Castillo fight is very much on the cards for next June, provided that Ricky gets past Urango, of course," Hatton Sr. confirmed. "It's a match that real boxing fans will relish, the 'white' Mexican against the 'real' Mexican. They could put them both in a phone booth. It will be that kind of fight."

It would also put Hatton firmly back on the right path, a big bout that would surely land in Las Vegas against an opponent, like himself, ranked in THE RING's pound-for-pound top 10. It will be two years exactly since Hatton found himself in similar circumstances—in his seminal title challenge against Tszyu—if the bout comes off as planned, a strong indicator that the 28-year-old Mancunian has been forced down too many bogus avenues.

"I'm not at all going to argue that, but let me make a few salient points," Ray countered. "First of all, Ricky himself would be the first to admit that his performances since the Kostya Tszyu haven't been good, and I include, obviously, the Maussa fight. He's remained in what we call Kostya Tszyu-mode, fighting everyone, steaming in, neglecting his boxing skills. He had to go in like a bull against Tszyu to get his respect and to negate the qualities Kostya brought to the ring, but we'd like to see far more of the beautiful, exciting boxer that Ricky can be. We're not coming from a standpoint of denial or anything like it in any of this. We know that for some time it's been, as I say, far from ideal.

"We want the real Ricky Hatton to stand up again. If Carlos Baldomir hadn't got there first and the fight with Arturo Gatti had been made, which was our plan, I believe we would already have seen the real Ricky back in the ring. That's just another of the obstacles we've had to overcome, and these have been serious obstacles. When you have a fight-

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

In late-2003, Hatton felt ready to take on Tszyu after a victory over Ben Tackie. Instead, Warren (above) rewarded his fighter with Danish journeyman Dennis Holbaek Pedersen (below).

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Hatton is counting on 2007 to change the recent downswing his career path took in '06. He's opted to move back down to 140, where he's hoping his devastating power and exalted times, like his victory over Tszyu, will arrive again.

er who's spent more time in the courtroom than in the gym over the past year, it's difficult for him to maintain his focus. It's impossible. Thankfully, all of that is behind us now (Warren dropped his High Court action against the Hattons in September, stating that "the aim of both parties is now to enter into discussions which will hopefully form the basis of a working relationship at some stage in the future") and we can move on, which is a terrific relief for Ricky especially.

"Under the circumstances, it has been really difficult, and Ricky's been diverted off the track we'd hoped to keep him on. But he's still unbeaten, and he's still at the forefront of HBO's plans. Floyd Mayweather remains the superfight that could happen by the end of next year, probably in the fall. That's the third fight we're looking to make for next year. The will is there among the people at HBO, and that's what we in the Ricky Hatton camp want to see happen. The match could even be made at a catchweight. So while I accept that all has not gone according to plan, at least not yet, it would be wrong to think that, because of this, Ricky Hatton has lost his way. He still has an awful long way to go."

It is worth noting, too, that in his autobiography, Hatton suggests that when all appeared to be rosy while he remained under the promotional banner of Warren, there were underlying problems that, ultimately, led to their acrimonious separation.

"After beating Ben Tackie (in December 2003), I felt on top of the world, and I was ready for anything and anybody," Hatton revealed. "I was in my prime and I wanted a piece of the action at the very top level. So who did I get next? Dennis Holbaek Pedersen (a Danish journeyman), that's who. I look back on those times with a lot of sadness because I genuinely felt like jacking the sport in because I got so low. I cried about it on a number of occasions, through sheer frustration. Then the rumors started about how I didn't want to face the best and how I was cowering away from the likes of Tszyu. I knew I was ready, and yet I was wading through treacle, or, more specifically, Pedersen.

"I was desperate to take on the elite of the 10-stone (140-pound) division. I told Frank so in no uncertain terms. Of course, he has been around long enough to have his opinion, but ultimately a promoter should do what his fighter wants. Not the other way round."

We know, of course, what happened when Hatton finally got Tszyu in the ring, and we know the fighting heart that beats inside this little warrior. Has Ricky Hatton lost his way? He is apparently on a circuitous route, but maybe this is the most significant point of all: The man, most of all, who can get him back on track is Hatton himself—and he is a man not easily held off. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

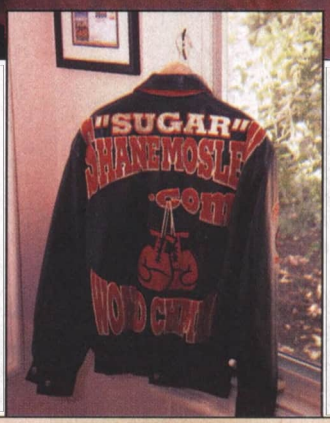
AT HOME WITH THE MOSLEYS

By Ivan Goldman
PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

The Mosley family poses on a spiral staircase outside of their California mansion. They are, from the top, Norman, Taiseki (wearing white shirt), Najee, Jin, Mee Yon (on Jin's lap), Shane, and Shane Jr.

Afterspending all afternoon with Shane Mosley and his wife, Jin, we found no evidence of ear-biting, alcoholic rants, rage, depression, paranoia, wife-beating, the dangling of children from balconies, or possession of stolen property. Geraldo is unlikely to rob our material. But, heck, decent people enjoying life deserve attention too.

This was the second mission of a series by your intrepid photo-and-scribble team of Jan Sanders and Ivan Gold-



Shane in the game room surrounded by various mementos of his career, including his championship belts (bottom) and custom-made jacket (right).

man. Once again, we were visiting with a fighter who'd experienced fantastic success, suffered setbacks in a series, and was considered finished, then shocked both critics and opponents by climbing back into serious contention.

The first subject of THE RING's day-in-the-life team was the witty, sometimes quarrelsome James Toney, whose personality is about as similar to laid-back Mosley's as a fish is to a bicycle. What the two of them share is intelligence, fighting skill, toughness, and, most of all, tenacity. Both fought their way out of adversity, disappointment, and the edge of prizefighting nowhere. The opportunity for a second chance made them more dangerous. Prospective opponents may tell the world that these guys are over the hill, but not one of them believes it.

When we called on the Mosleys, Shane and Floyd Mayweather, the Big Kahuna of the welterweight division and number one on the pound-for-pound list, were circling each other in the media like tigers. Complicating the issue was Oscar De La Hoya, a partner with Mosley in Golden Boy Promotions. A match between Oscar and "Pretty Boy" would be an even bigger draw than Mayweather-Mosley. In fact, it would be the biggest attraction in all of boxing. Another complication was THE RING champion Carlos

Shane and his namesake toss a football around on the basketball court.

Jin, who is also Shane's manager, has immersed herself in the boxing business and has been dismayed at the chaotic manner in which it functions.

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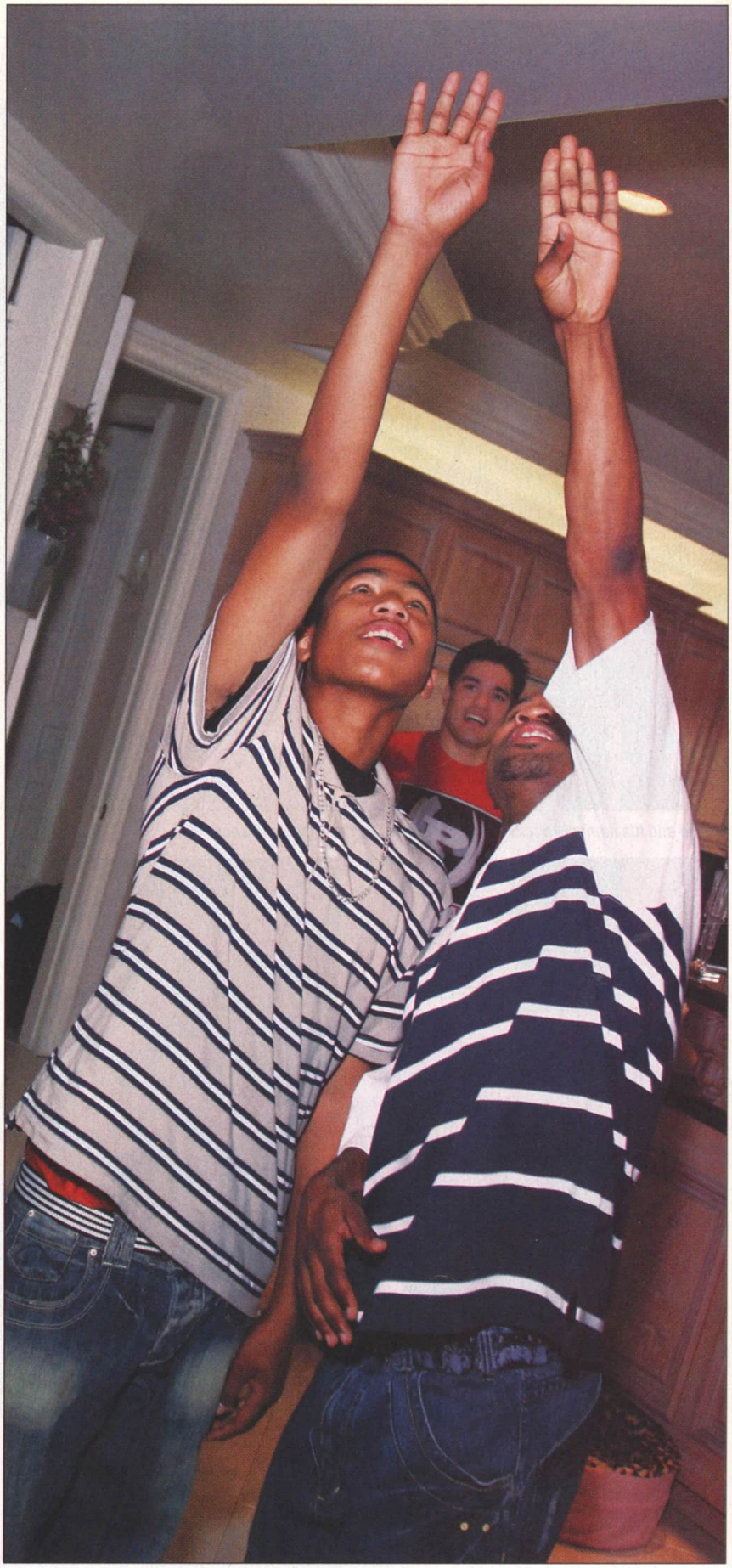


Shane Jr., a talented athlete in his own right, is already taller than his dad, with a longer reach.

Baldomir, who was getting a shot at Mayweather first.

When we started making arrangements for this article, we decided to make sure Shane's wife and manager, Jin, was part of it. She's become a player in the take-no-prisoners world of the boxing business, and proved herself a formidable customer, standing up to whomever she needs to or maybe just wanted to because she ran into somebody who could use some schooling.

This makes the Mosleys a fine team because like his friend, partner, and former opponent, De La Hoya, Shane, 35, prefers to lower the boom on somebody inside the ring. He looks upon quarreling and confrontations beyond the ropes as mostly a waste of time.

We found the Mosleys at their home in the hills east of Los Angeles, toward Big Bear, the ski town where Shane makes his pre-fight camps, and Las Vegas, where most of his bouts often take place. He grew up close by. His parents live in the neighborhood and help with the five grandchildren—three of whom Shane and Jin had together. The home is a mansion—spacious, spotless, and full of light, with plenty of marble and granite, and a chandelier in the foyer that's as big as a Volkswagen.

But it's not the foreboding kind of mansion you see in films where stone-faced butlers look askance at anyone who shows up without a chauffer and a business manager. Friends and associates of various ethnic origins casually walked in and out all afternoon, free to watch a ballgame on TV, check out the fridge, or go shoot some baskets in the full-sized court next to the pool.

My favorite room was one of the smallest. It contained a pool table, chess pieces set up on a board, a couple of gumball machines, and walls full of carefully framed, mostly sports-related, but not all Mosley-related photos, fight posters, and magazine covers.

One poster advertised the second

Quotes From Home

Shane On Commitment: "Lots of people give credit to the trainer when so much of it has to come from inside the fighter. I've seen fighters on the Olympic team who should have gone somewhere, but they stopped. They didn't want it enough."

Jin On Floyd Mayweather: "Whenever there's a flashy, big-mouthed person, I tend to go with the underdog. The thing about Floyd that aggravates me is that when Shane was his age, he was also undefeated and had a higher kayo percentage. It's just a matter of time before he loses, but Floyd doesn't realize that."

Shane On His Former Trainer Joe Goossen: "When you see a trainer who takes a guy from ground level (Rafael and Gabe Ruelas) into world champion, I know he's a good trainer. I fought Rafael twice in the amateurs, and Joe had to find a way to beat me. I've known him since I was 12 years old."

Jin On Fernando Vargas' Co-Manager Shelly Finkel: "I personally don't think Shelly Finkel cares about anybody but himself."

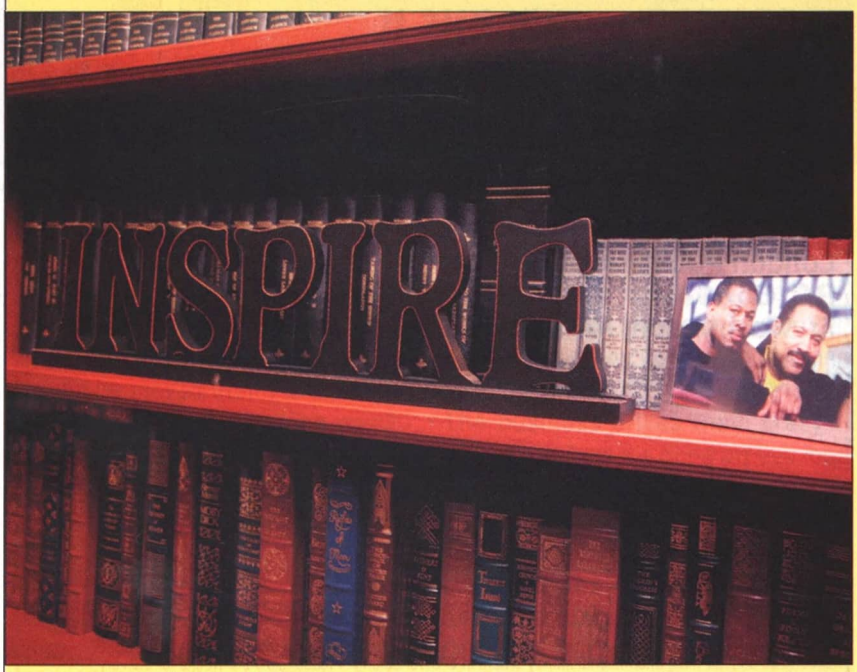
Shane On His Father-Trainer Jack Mosley: "Right now, it's better to be with my father for my style. My father is energetic, and I'm more technical."

Jin On Heavyweight James Toney: "He's the poor man's Mike Tyson. Every time I see this guy he's like a little kid begging for attention."

Shane On Power: "Just because a guy's a big puncher at 140 doesn't mean he'll have a punch at 147. When I fought Antonio Diaz, he was moving up, and he had a great punch at 140. But when he hit me, I didn't feel anything. I was just looking for the right punch to take him out. (He found it in the sixth round.) But sometimes when you think a guy can't hurt you, it's just because he hasn't hit you in the right spot yet."

Jin On Success: "Once a fighter's on his way, everyone wants credit. Everyone wants to be chef in the kitchen. They say some little thing you already knew, and then, after you win, they want all the credit."

—I.G.



One of Shane's inspirations has been his father-trainer, Jack.

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match between Mosley and Winky Wright two years ago at Mandalay Bay. The poster is a clue to Mosley's personality. Although he's a driven competitor, when the fight's over, he accepts the outcome, which in this case was a majority decision defeat. He doesn't let it eat at him, and he certainly doesn't, like Marvelous Marvin Hagler did after losing to Sugar Ray Leonard, go off to Italy to sulk for the rest of his life. He gets back in the gym and works on winning the next one.

"I've never seen anyone as disciplined and determined as Shane," said Jin. "Exercising, training. He thoroughly enjoys it."

"I can't wait to go up to Big Bear," Shane agreed.

"You know," said Jin, "I enjoy good food, for instance. But Shane looks at it differently. Food is just fuel to him."

Shane's smile broadened, as if to say, you caught me. It's well-known that he doesn't blow up in weight between fights, and his training isn't reserved exclusively for fight camp. It's part of his everyday life. He works out in his home gym and plays other sports on a regular basis. He also owns a gym in nearby Pomona, where he trains kids and younger fighters. One of them is his son Shane Mosley Jr., 15, who shows, his father said, plenty of talent. But Shane Senior isn't rushing him into anything. Shane Junior has yet to enter amateur competition. "He'll be bigger than I am," the father said, referring to his growth spurt. "And he's got something."

A few minutes later, Shane Junior entered the room. I informed him his dad had been bragging about him, and he flashed a precise copy of Shane Senior's easy smile.

His father also drops into other gyms from time to time to acquaint himself with a wide range of styles. But isn't he afraid of killing somebody? "I don't throw punches," he explained. "I work on not getting hit." He showed a quick routine, moving his head, hiding his chin behind his shoulder, slipping, and sliding.

Family man: Shane ties Mee Yon's shoelaces, while Taiseki ties his own and Najee smiles for the camera.

"Let's see your stomach," someone said, as several of us stood in the kitchen eating broiled chicken from a health-conscious takeout eatery. He lifted his shirt and flashed a washboard torso that looked like it could break fists.

When we stepped outside, I pulled a football out of my car trunk, and he and some friends started tossing bullet spirals back and forth like NFL pros. He picked up a basketball and threw two half-court baskets in a row—all net (he missed the third). This exceedingly gifted athlete made a name for himself around the L.A. gym circuit long before he turned pro. He was the whole package. As he moved from the amateurs to pros in 1993, his sparring matches with the likes of Genaro Hernandez, Hector Lopez, and David Kamau put them all in the spotlight.

Jin, Irish-Korean, all American daughter of a Long Island CPA, has been with Shane six years. As she immersed herself in the sport he loves, she found herself baffled by some of what she found.

"Boxing has no order," she complained. "It's chaotic, and it's corrupt. I think that's why you have guys like Mike Tyson acting crazy sometimes. The business drives them crazy. I don't know how it's gone on this long the way it is. You have these naïve, hungry, desperate fighters, and they run into these really polished salesmen, and they're not equipped to deal with them. I see what's left of the Iran Barkleys—former world champions wandering the streets

and nobody cares. Golden Boy has been such a breath of fresh air for us. Shane and I were so fed up when it came along."

I pointed out that the double-cross didn't always go in one direction. I'd seen instances where fighters had pulled a fast one on a trainer or manager. But Shane stuck up for fighters. When a fighter finds success, he said, "the whole world changes on him. Everybody wants something from him, and everything around him is changing. Then he sees the one guy he really trusted who's always been there for him, and he's changing. The fighter doesn't know what to think anymore.

"They go through this process where they're told to get a hold of a guy who can get him where he's supposed to be—these TV trainers."

As a partner in Golden Boy Promotions with De La Hoya, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Bernard Hopkins, Mosley is gradually stepping into his second career developing other fighters. And Golden Boy, which looks more and more like the 400-pound gorilla of the future, has already moved well beyond the smaller shows of its infancy into the big time to challenge Bob Arum's Top Rank and Don King.

But Shane isn't ready to hang up his gloves just yet. How many more

Shane at the wheel of their mobile home. As Jin doesn't like to fly, they drive across the country every year to visit her parents on Long Island.

fights does he think he has in him? "At least six," he said. He looked over at Jin and smiled. "She wants one or two," he added.

Said Jin: "I'm trying to wind him down right now. I look at pugilistic dementia, and I worry. I make him take MRIs. I talk to Dr. Margaret Goodman, I talk to anybody who might know something." To her, the extra millions and added celebrity those extra fights might bring aren't worth risking the health of her husband. Besides, the Mosleys aren't burning up dollars in jet-set frenzy. The house is paid for.

Shane quickly pointed out that he's been seriously banged up only once, in his first match with Vernon Forrest, when he suffered from a tremendous clash of heads early in round two and went the distance on guts alone. That round in January 2002 triggered the four losses against Forrest and Winky Wright in two back-to-back catastrophes.

The renovated Mosley was slotted to head up a Golden Boy card in February, and he issued an open challenge to Mayweather, which Pretty Boy probably won't accept, coming so soon after his Baldomir outing. But there are plenty of great matchups out there in the hot, hot welterweight division. If Baldomir were to best Mayweather, the Mosleys would be more than happy to challenge him instead. They have their feet on the ground, but they're quick to adjust. That's part of what makes them refreshing—and dangerous. And if they didn't exude at least a hint of danger, what kind of fight people would they be? ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

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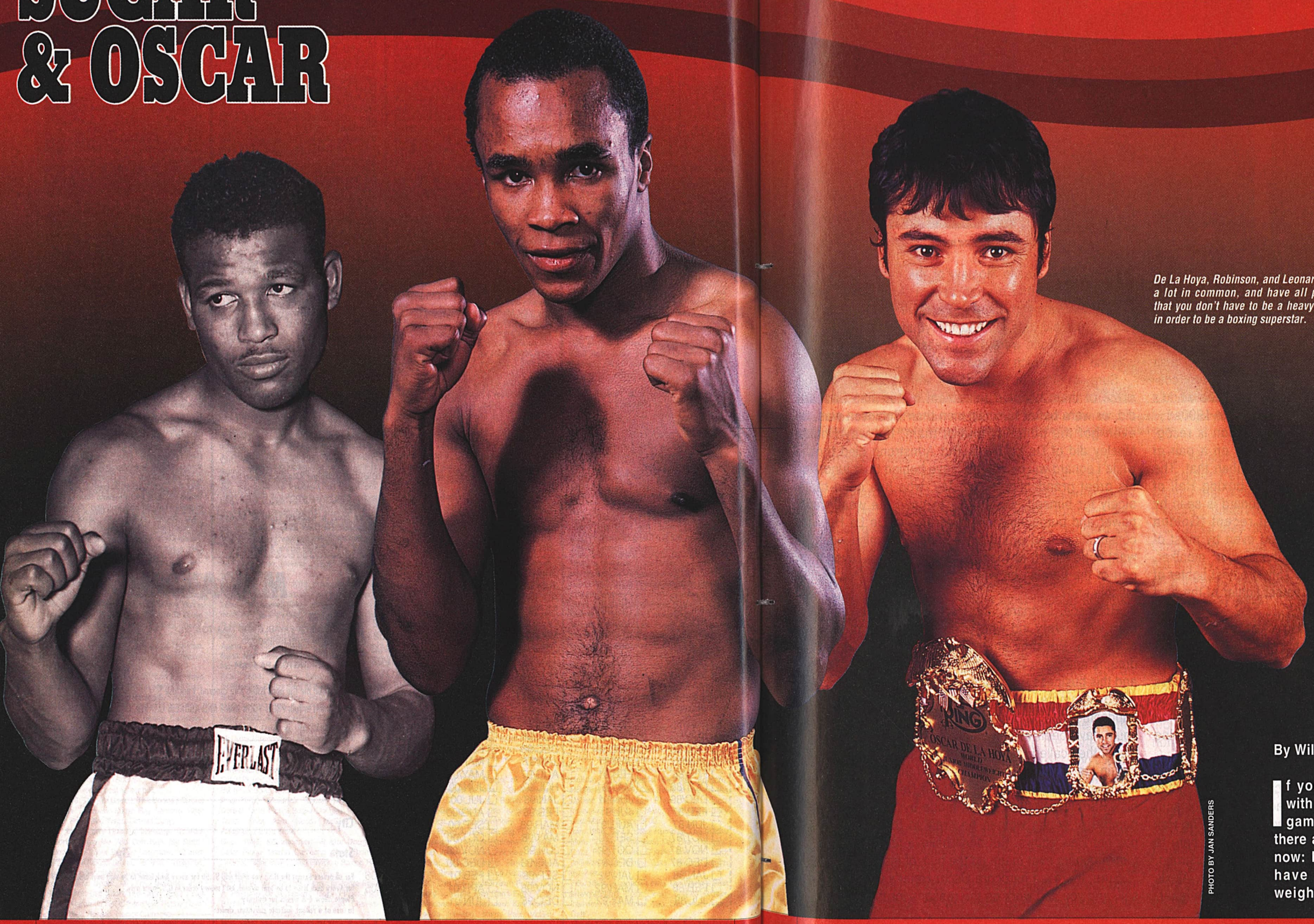
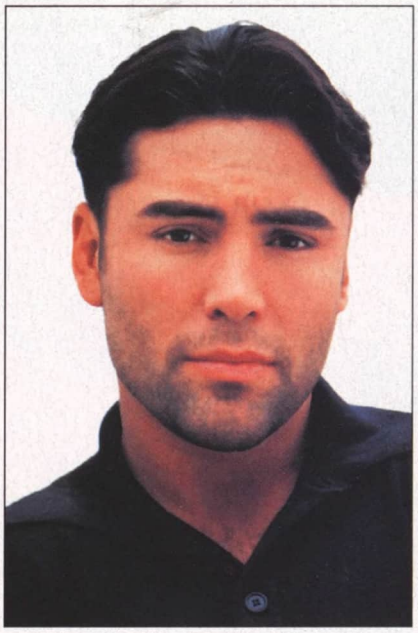
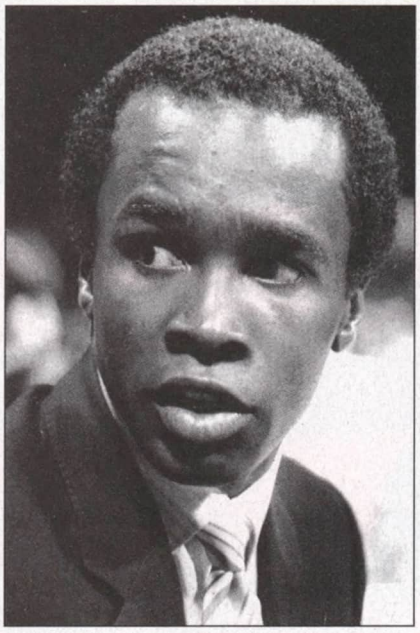
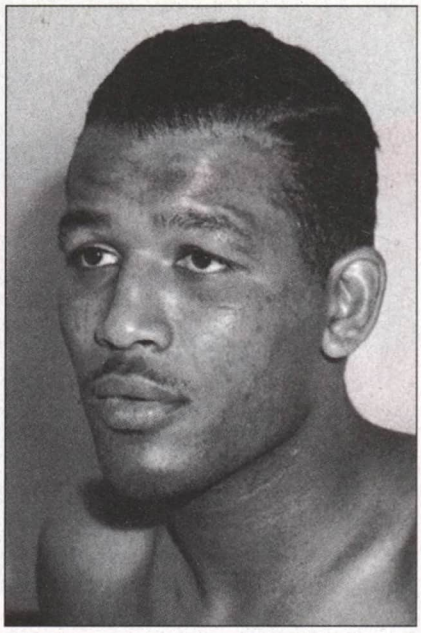


De La Hoya, Robinson, and Leonard have a lot in common, and have all proven that you don't have to be a heavyweight in order to be a boxing superstar.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

By William Dettloff

If you've been traveling along with this circus we call the fight game for a long enough time, there are two things you know by now: Fleas are a bitch and there have been three non-heavy-weights in the modern era who

The hunk factor: It certainly didn't hurt the careers De La Hoya, Leonard, and Robinson that they were all handsome men.

have been set the standard for success in just about any way you care to measure—Sugar Ray Robinson, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Oscar De La Hoya. All three transcended the sport like few others.

Pick your barometer. Wealth? All three amassed fortunes and were among the highest paid athletes of their times. (If De La Hoya fought more than once every couple of years, he'd certainly still rank among the world's top-earning athletes, the way he did in the late-1990s.)

Dominance between the ropes? Robinson is recognized universally as the best to ever tie on a pair of gloves. Praise doesn't come any higher than that. The guy should have his own wing at the boxing Hall of Fame, or maybe even his own hall. Leonard is seen by many as the best of boxing's most recent "Golden Age"—the '80s—and is finally viewed even by most of the dinosaurs as being worthy of the "Sugar" moniker. Indeed, THE RING named him the 15th greatest fighter of the 20th century and the fifth greatest fighter of the past 50 years.

And De La Hoya, for all his detractors, had roughly a seven- or eight-year run when his standing among the five or six best fighters in the world was irrefutable. He was THE RING's Fighter of the Year in '95, has at this writing beaten 14 beltholders, and is the biggest star in the business, bar none. He can fight. You don't become the pay-per-view giant he was (and is) without being able to do that. Sorry, haters.

You'll argue that there were dozens of wonderful fighters in the lower weights that campaigned mightily with all the verve and skill and alacrity that Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya did, and you're right. The Hall of Fame is full of them, and you'll find no effort here to detract from the legends of Willie Pep, Henry Armstrong, Kid Gavilan, Roberto Duran, Salvadore Sanchez, Alexis Arguello, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Pernell Whitaker, Felix Trinidad, Shane Mosley, or the many others who fought in the same arenas and in front of the same crowds as Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya. But all those great old legends and the young ones share the same curse: None were as successful, top to bottom, as was the trio of which we speak. None.

Sure, at singular tasks some were superior. Maybe some of them handled retirement better than Leonard did, or were better businessmen than Robinson was, or even got the better of one of them, the way Shane Mosley did of De La Hoya. But Armstrong died broke, while Leonard will be able to leave behind trust funds for his great grandchildren. Mosley, who has done quite nicely for himself, would love to have the wealth and power and burgeoning business empire De La Hoya is constructing. And what fighter in his right mind wouldn't want to be known as the best who ever did it—even if as part of the bargain he was forced to endure Robinson's pitiable end?

Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya achieved more than what every kid who walks into a gym dreams of achieving. But they share in common those reflected dreams and other things too that shed some light on us and this business we frequently hate to love.

For example, all three were charismatic, dashing, handsome men, and that helped—a lot. *Time* magazine could have been writing about all three when, in a 1981 piece, they called Leonard, "a polite, boyishly handsome star in the making." The ladies loved them, sure, but not the way they love rock stars. When De La Hoya was at his swarthy peak, much was made by the press of the number of young women he drew to the game and to pay-per-view shows. But don't believe for a second that teenyboppers ever made up the bulk of his fan club.

Sure, there's a hardcore Oscar Hater's Club out there still, and you can work on the reasons for that if you like,

Both Robinson and IBC President Jim Norris look pleased at the contract signing for Sugar Ray's rematch with Carmen Basilio, but Robinson drove a hard bargain, which made him unpopular with many in the boxing establishment.

but remember this: Most fight fans are men. They are now, when De La Hoya rules at the box office; they were when Leonard smiled his way through press conferences and 7-Up commercials. They were when Robinson was tap dancing on *The Ed Sullivan Show* or hanging out outside the Sugar Ray Lounge in Harlem. Maybe your wife or girlfriend swoons when she sees Oscar on Leno, but if not for you, she wouldn't know who he is.

So think about it: Three of the most popular and successful fighters of the last hundred years (and you can throw Muhammad Ali into the mix too) just happened to be good-looking, charming guys in a game populated with many more Clint Howards than Brad Pitts. Not an unflattering feature among the three. No flattened noses or broken teeth, no gnarled ears, or wayward eyeballs. Three guys who would look perfectly at home on the cover of *GQ*. What does that say about the fight game, and about us, the men watching them? We don't know exactly either, but we're willing to move along to the next point if you are, before this analysis gets any more uncomfortable.

Want more? All three were tough, skilled negotiators who refused to be bullied by high-powered promoters. Robinson was self-managed for much of his career and refused to fight for the mob-controlled International Boxing Club, which owned most of the champions. In 1972, he summed up his negotiating philosophy this way for author Peter Heller: "If I was due a dollar, I felt I wanted that dollar. If I could help a man make a dollar, I thought I deserved part of it. And I took a stand to get that, and if they didn't pay me, I didn't fight. And if something come up that could prevent me getting my end of the money, I would call off the fight." That attitude turned off a lot of people, but it also made Robinson filthy rich—for a while at least.

Leonard was no less shrewd. He knew right off the bat that he would be able to call his own shots not too far into his career—particularly with Howard Cosell's considerable influence behind him—and he was right. Eschewing long-term offers from the sport's biggest promoters, he let attorney Mike Trainer do all the heavy lifting, and, by the time he was established as the biggest non-heavyweight in the sport, he was strictly a promotional free agent, lending his services to the highest bidder. Leonard didn't need them; they needed *him*. Before his first retirement, he'd bagged approximately $37-million in purses.

De La Hoya was no less dogged in his frequently contentious dealings with longtime promoter Bob Arum, who, when De La Hoya finally broke away for good to start up Golden Boy Promotions, described De La Hoya as "not a bright guy." Of course, this was after De La

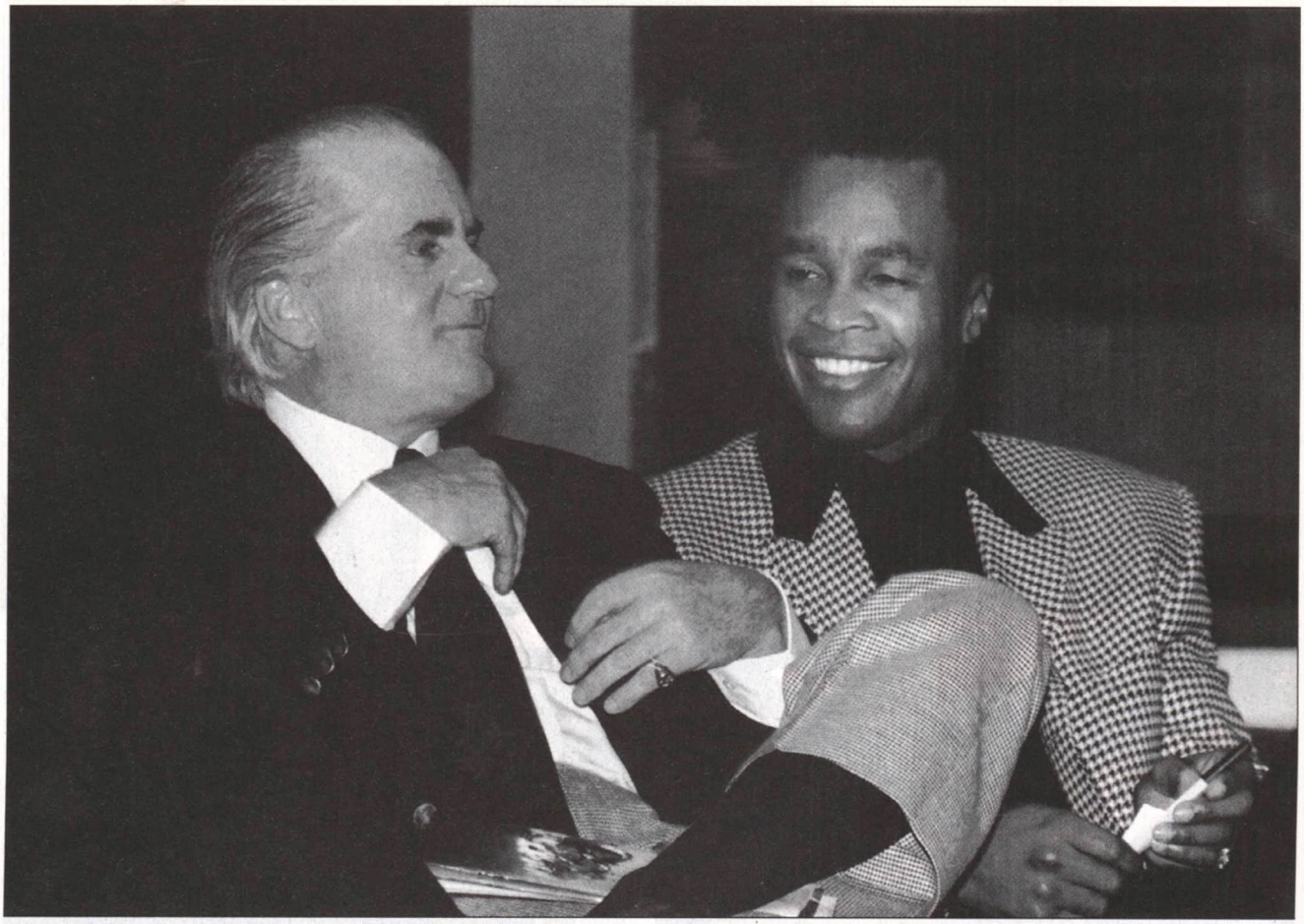
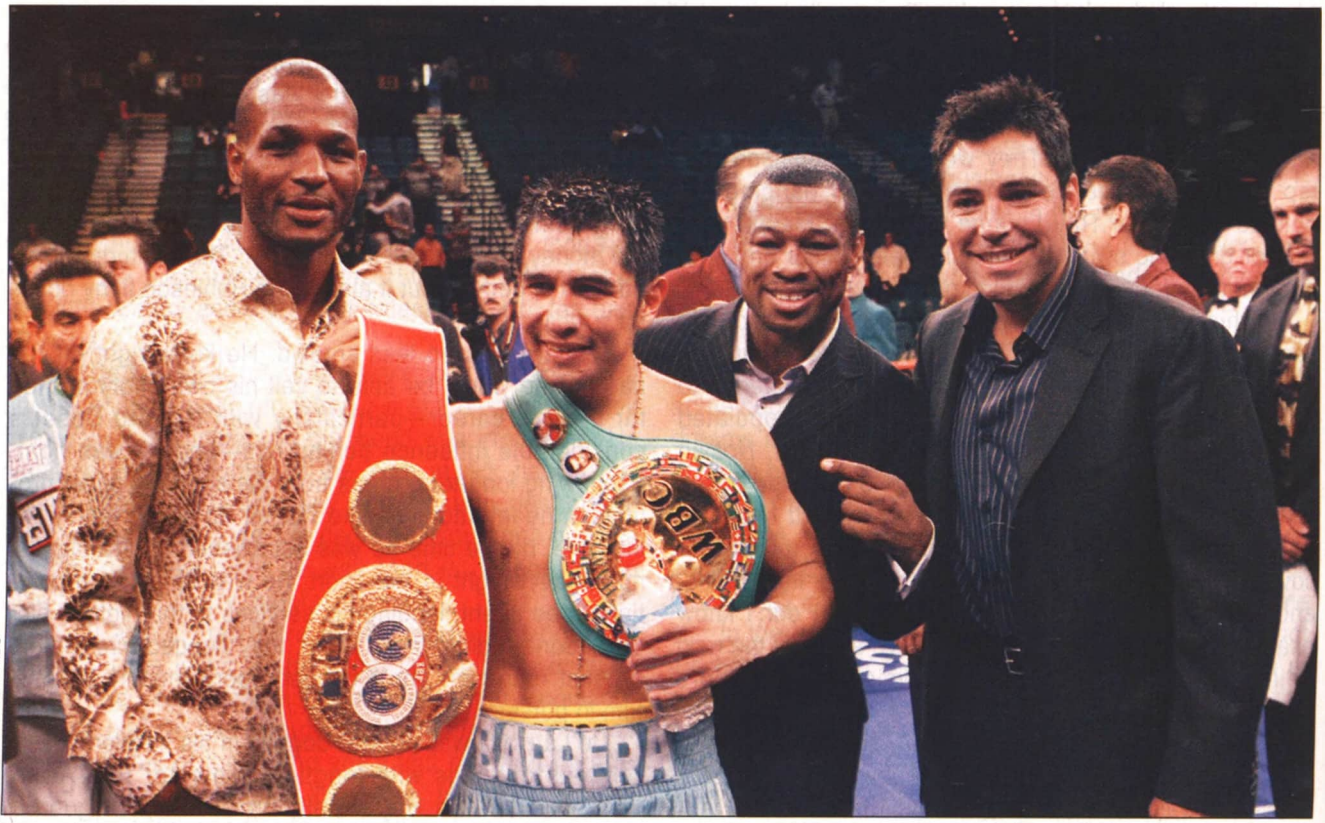


PHOTO BY AL BELLO

Attorney Mike Trainer helped guide Leonard's career and establish him as a free agent, free of long-term promotional contracts.



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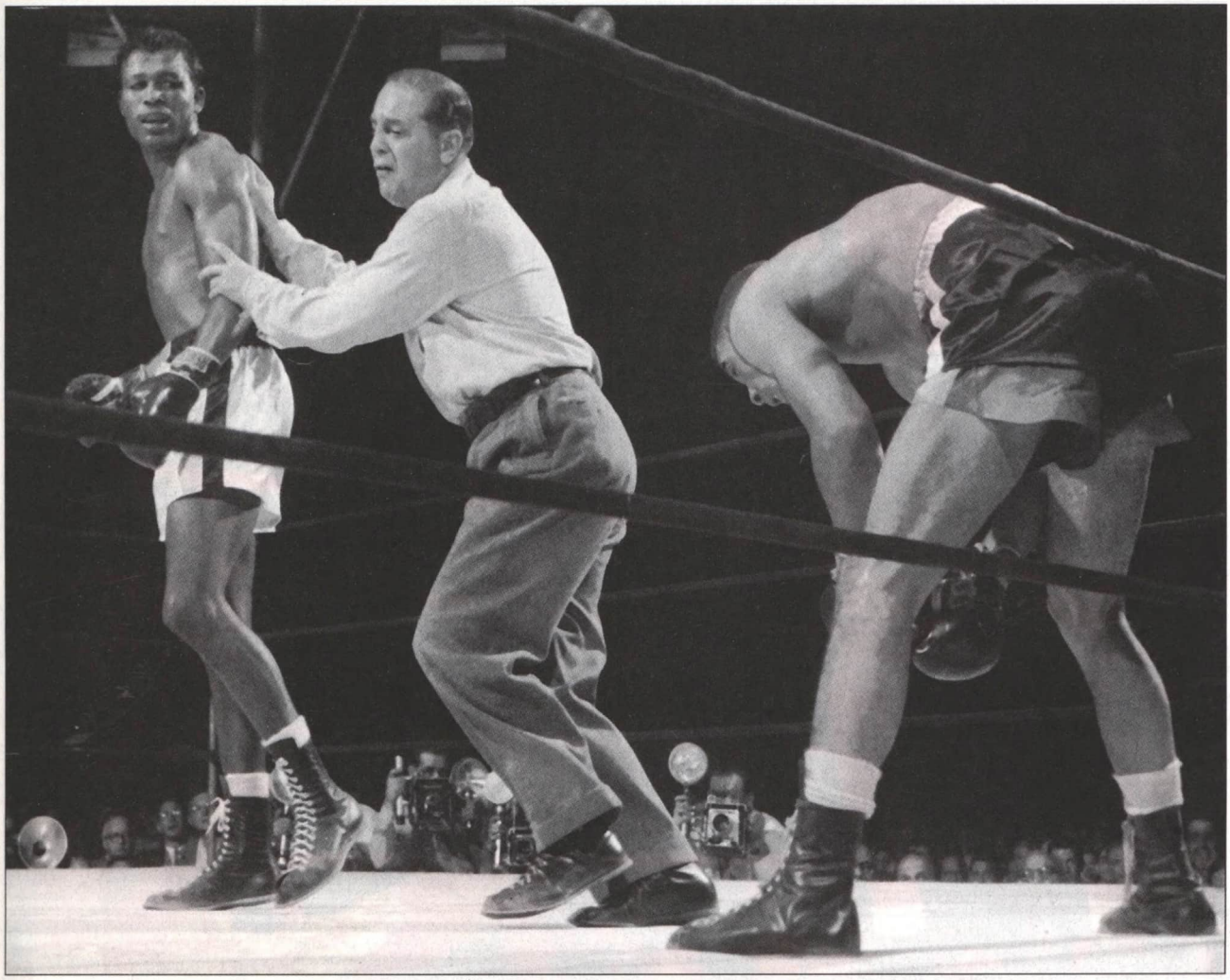
De La Hoya's feud with former promoter Bob Arum eventually led to the formation of Golden Boy Promotions. He has since made fellow fighters Bernard Hopkins, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Shane Mosley officers in the company.



Robinson's do-or-die moment came in his rematch with Randy Turpin, who had taken the middleweight title away from him. Bleeding and in trouble, Sugar Ray cut loose with an all-out attack and stopped the Englishman in the 10th round.

Hoya shocked some by telling the press "I beat the biggest Jew ever to come out of Harvard" after winning a suit against Arum to void his contract.

Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya all enjoyed successful comebacks after it appeared their best days were behind them. Certainly, Leonard both succeeded and failed most spectacularly among the three; his victory over Marvelous Marvin Hagler in '87 to win the world middleweight title, after a three-year retirement, was unprecedented and stamped him unalterably as an all-time great. So significant is it that it's chief among the reasons why we forgive his later disasters against Terry Norris and Hector Camacho.

De La Hoya never retired, but he took off nearly two years after his middleweight title fight loss to Bernard Hopkins, and you're not alone if you thought he'd never be a top fighter again. But there he was last May, whacking the bejesus out of Ricardo Mayorga and looking spectacular doing it. The fight to be made now, really, is against the best fighter pound-for-pound in the world in Floyd Mayweather, and if you don't think that's a long way back from De La Hoya's dismal showings against Felix Sturm and Hopkins, think again. The display against Mayorga was very nearly perfect, something few expected to see from De La Hoya at this late stage of his career.

Falling right in between Leonard's miracle comeback and De La Hoya's return is Robinson's return to world title contention following his retirement as world welterweight champion in '52, right after his loss to Joey Maxim. His businesses, which included a cafe, a dry cleaning shop, a barbershop, a bakery, and a lounge, failed one by one, leading to his comeback in '55. He wasn't the same guy he'd been when he left (they never are), but he was good enough to whip a slew of future Hall of Famers and win the world middleweight title three more times.

All three comebacks benefited from having guys in high standing that were made to order for them. Leonard timed his comeback superbly; Hagler had slowed down perceptibly by that point, as was evident in his struggle with crude slugger John Mugabi in his previous fight. The Ricardo Mayorga Express had largely run out of steam, and he was (and remains) a crude brawler anyway and a sucker for De La Hoya's snappy left hook. And Robinson's favorite punching bag, Bobo Olson, was

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Many consider De La Hoya's defining moment the final round of his seesaw battle with Ike Quartey in 1999. With the fight hanging in the balance, "The Golden Boy" went for broke and secured a victory with his blistering 12th-round rally.

the middleweight champion when Robinson came back, and he promptly handed the title back to Robinson in the second round of their fight in December '55.

Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya also are linked by single defining moments each had when they appeared on the verge of losing a fight and struggled back to win. Even their comments afterward are similar. For Leonard, it was late in his September '81 superfight against Tommy Hearns, when, down on points, he rallied to stop Hearns in the 14th. In response to trainer Angelo Dundee's famous, "You're blowin' it son" speech, Leonard told the *Las Vegas Review Journal*, "I knew what it meant: all or nothing."

For Robinson, the moment was his rally against Randy Turpin in their rematch for the middleweight title in '51 in New York: He said this afterward: "I was having a tough time anyway. I figured I gotta do something. So I went at him. It was do or die."

And, for De La Hoya, it was the closing moments of his tense bout with welterweight titlist counterpart Ike Quartey, when, in a very close fight, De La Hoya floored Quartey early in the 12th round and then blasted him along the ropes for a solid minute in a frenzied attempt to knock him out or at least secure a points victory. "I think I showed my true heart that night. I'm proud of that moment," De La Hoya said several years later.

De La Hoya's assistant trainer at the time, Hall of Famer Gil Clancy, said, "Oscar showed me something with the way he came out in the last round. He knew the decision could have gone against him, and he came out throwing a lot of different combinations and going after the guy. He was saying, *There's no way you're taking my title*." Clancy could have been talking about Robinson against Turpin there, or Leonard against Hearns.

We know, all champions think that way. The real ones put those thoughts into action. Robinson, Leonard, and De La Hoya did and, more importantly, showed the world that the fight game doesn't have to revolve around heavyweights. Given the right combination of skill, charisma, circumstance, and temperament, a man of about 147 pounds, give or take, can be the biggest star in the circus. ■

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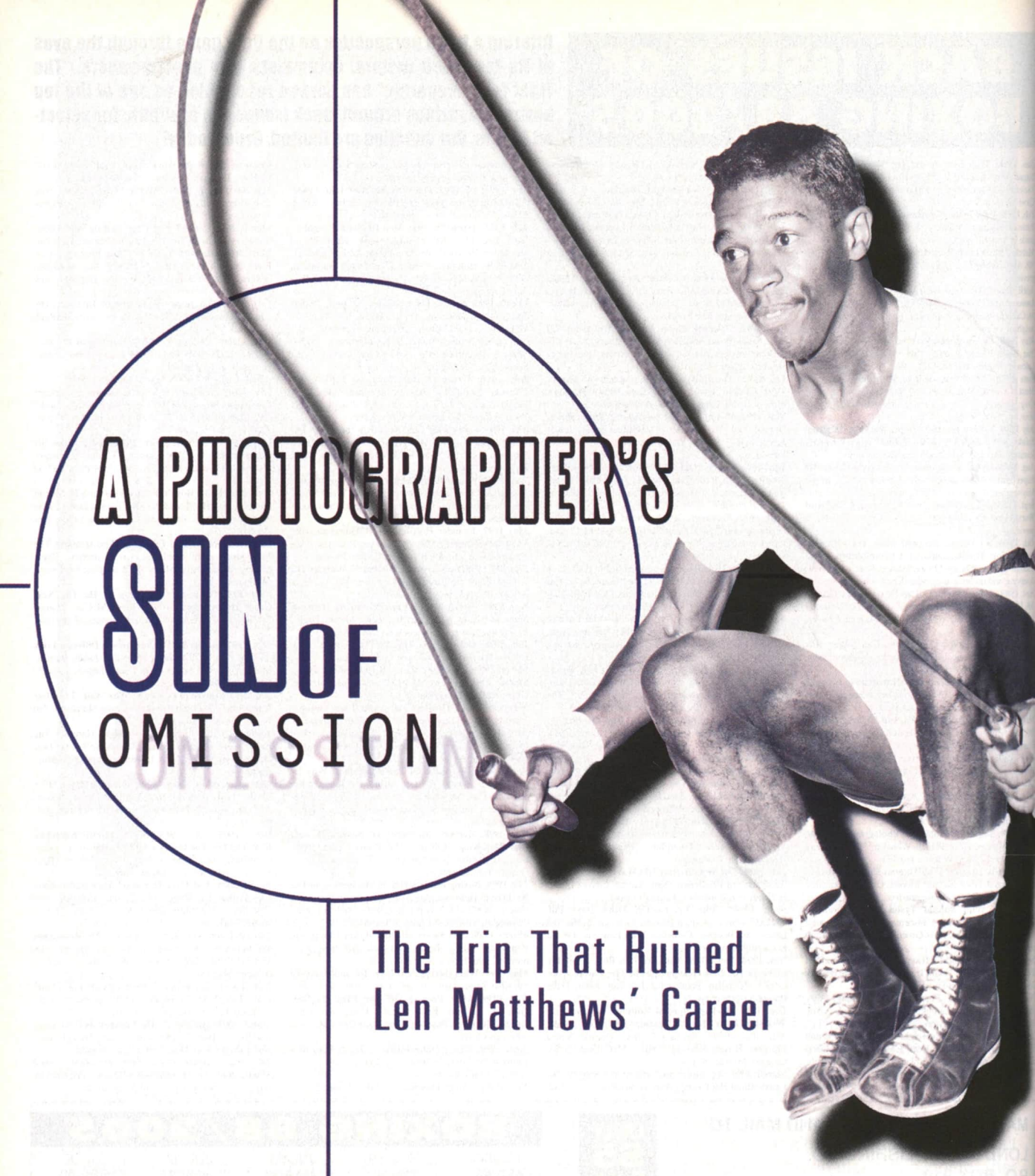


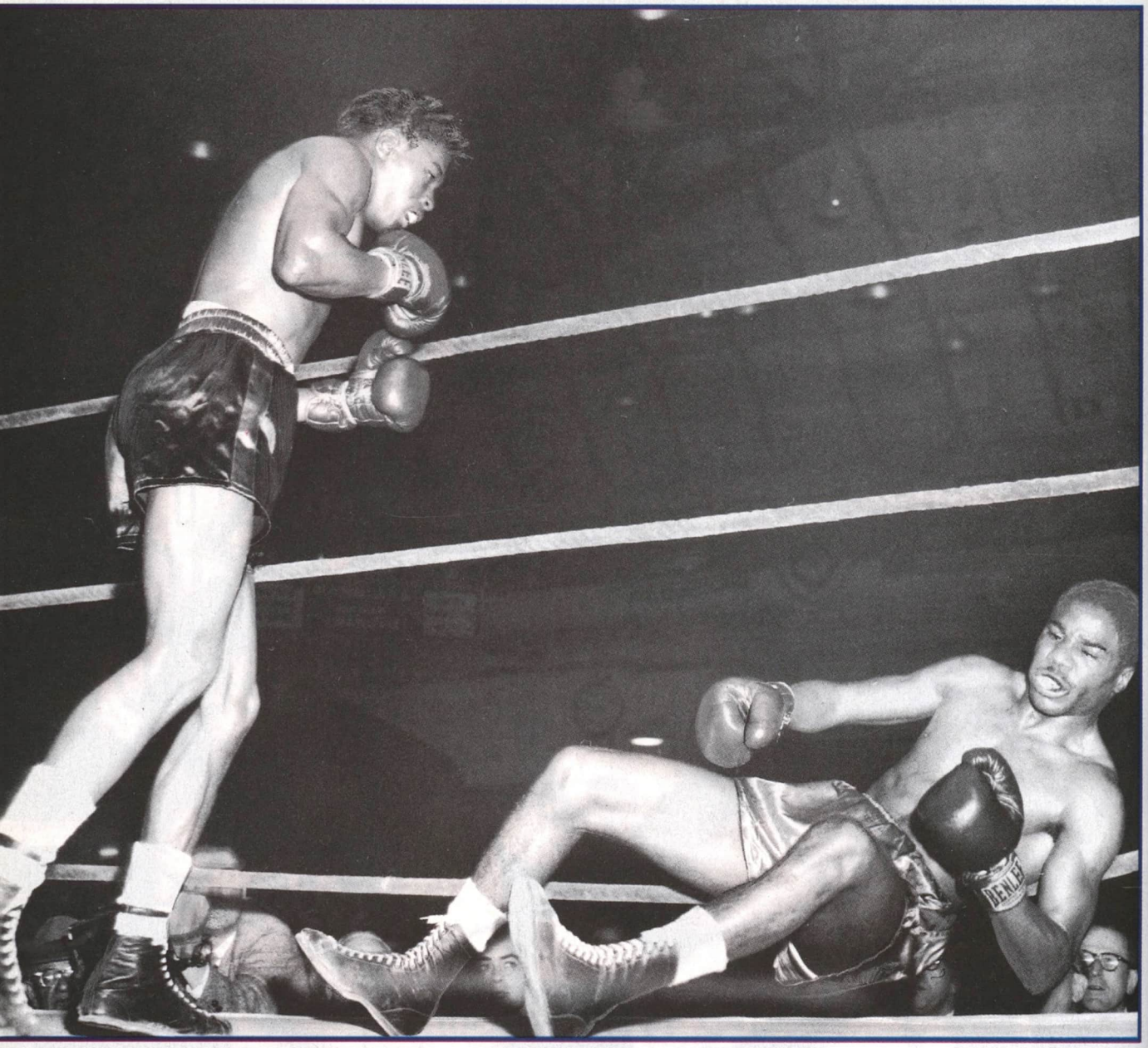
A PHOTOGRAPHER'S SIN OF OMISSION

The Trip That Ruined Len Matthews' Career

Text & Photos By Jack Tinney

I found Len Matthews' obituary buried deep inside a Philadelphia newspaper one day in late-August 2005. A custodian for the city school district, he had suffered from severe heart disease and died, at age 66, of pneumonia. His life ended in a nursing home. His promise as a lightweight boxing sensation—heir apparent, some believed, to Sugar Ray Robinson—

Matthews reminded a lot of folks of Sugar Ray Robinson, as he went undefeated in his first 16 pro bouts, including a fourth-round kayo of Henry "Toothpick" Brown in a fight held at Connie Mack Stadium.



Norman Young goes down and out in the fourth round of his February 1958 bout with Matthews at the Philadelphia Arena, a venue Matthews packed regularity. It was the Philly lightweight's sixth consecutive kayo win.

had ended on April 13, 1959, at the Philadelphia Arena, in a devastating hail of punches from Carlos Oritz. It was his first loss in 17 bouts. Afterward, as a sportswriter noted in the obit, Matthews was never the same.

What really happened to Len Matthews that night is a secret I have carried for 47 years.

Like every young news photographer at the *Philadelphia Bulletin* in the 1950s, I was put on the late shift, and that meant many a long, steamy night at the Arena. Not that I complained. Boxing was my passion. But after a short amateur boxing stint in the Air Force, any thoughts of going pro were dashed by a shoulder injury. I was still hooked on the sport, and Matthews was on his way to becoming everything I had wanted to be.

The 19-year-old's looks and skills reminded me of a young Robinson. He also possessed the one-punch kayo power of the great "Sugarman." Within six months of the start of his pro career in 1957, Matthews had ringsiders convinced of his potential with nine straight knockouts—and I covered all of them. Among his victims were Henry "Toothpick" Brown, Steve Ward, Orlando Zulueta, Norman Young, and Bobby Rodgers, who was counted out in the third round at Madison Square Garden.

Matthews, however, had an Achilles heel. When in trouble, he wouldn't tie up an opponent, insisting instead on punching his way out, even if it meant getting behind on the scorecards. In an eight-rounder, once again behind on points, he put Ray Lancaster on the canvas just as the bell sounded, earning him a draw. He was a comeback kid crowd-pleaser, much like Arturo Gatti is today. He filled the Philadelphia Arena to its rafters every time he entered the ring. And, as in Gatti's recent loss to Carlos Baldomir, he ran into a superior

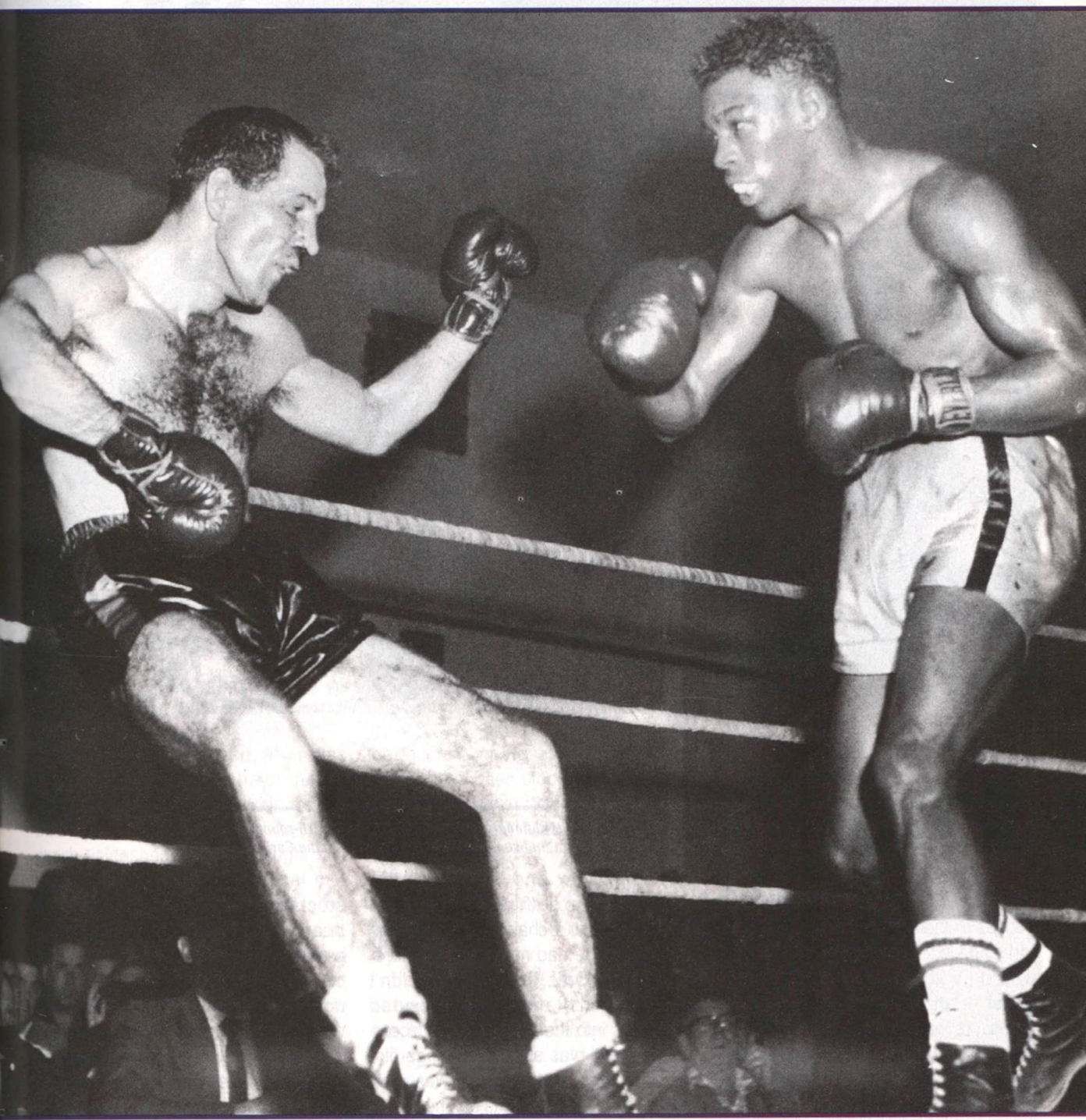
technician by the name of Carlos Ortiz.

Matthews had such natural raw power that his manager and trainer considered him invincible. Many sportswriters did not. They thought he had been brought along too quickly, matched against top contenders before he had learned even rudimentary defensive skills.

It wasn't a lack of technique, though, that tripped up Matthews on that spring night at the Arena.

In the 1950s, the camera of choice for sports photographers was the "4 x 5" Speed Graphic, which was both versatile and cumbersome. When covering at ringside, the photographer had the choice of shooting through the middle rope or under the bottom rope and, when the boxers were directly over head, had to quickly change focus and lean back in his chair. After each shot, he had to replace the slide in the film holder, cock the shutter, reverse the holder in the back of the camera, and again remove the opposite slide in order to take the next picture. Getting the knockout punch in those days was a real challenge.

By the sixth round of his bout with



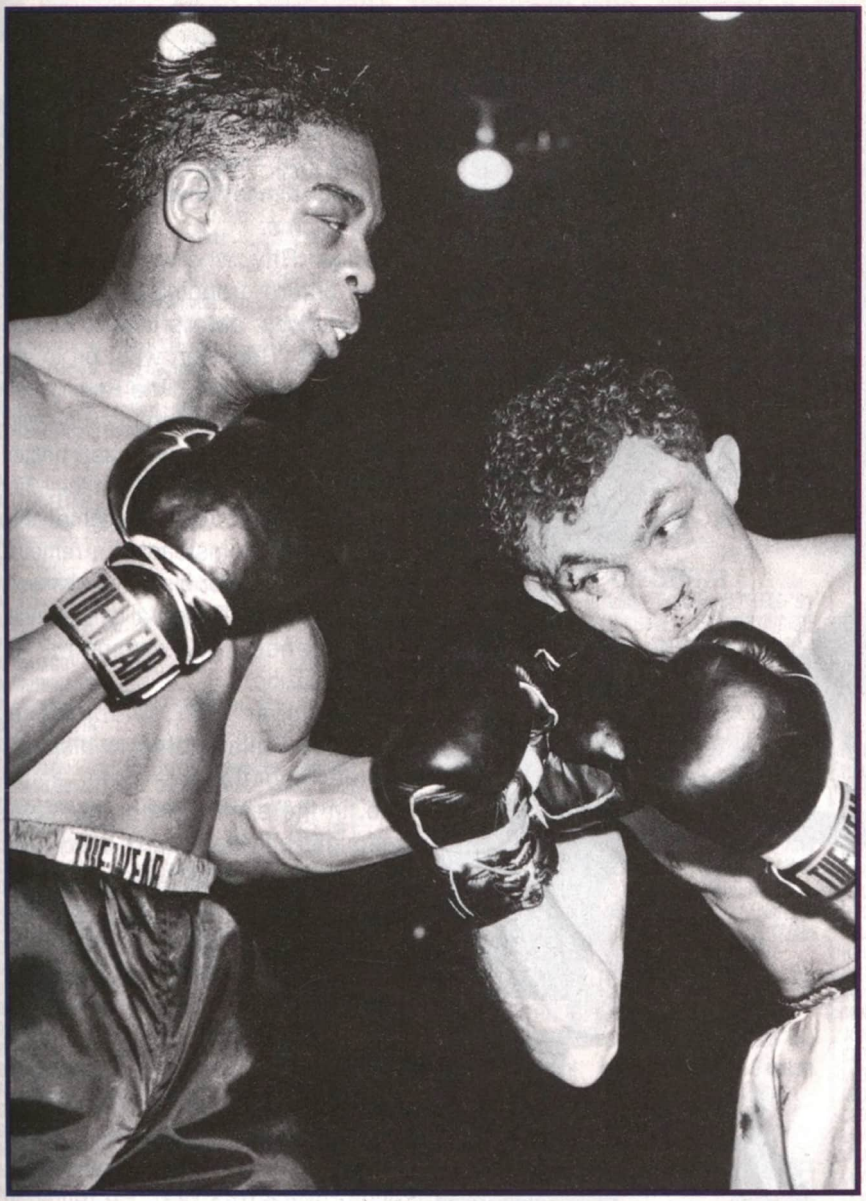
Matthews had a habit of falling behind on points and then rallying back to win. He was dangerously close to losing his December 1958 fight with Ray Lancaster, but scored a knockdown just before the final bell to salvage a draw.

Matthews puts Orlando Zulueta down in the seventh round of a fight the Philadelphian won via unanimous 10-round decision. Note the camera visible between Matthews' legs. It is a Speed Graphic, the same sort of camera that contributed to his downfall in the Carlos Ortiz fight.

top-contender Ortiz, Matthews knew he was in the fight of his life. His comfort zone was the center of the ring, where he could use his long-range power. If an opponent got him on the ropes, he was in trouble. In 15 previous matches, he had never had to fight inside; usually no one lasted that long. Ortiz was a different story. He could fight at any distance.

Matthews was behind on all the cards up to the sixth round, but he still had a puncher's chance to turn things around, as he had many times before. The savvy Ortiz, however, wouldn't give him distance. He crowded Matthews into the ropes directly above me just as I was about to change film holders. My Speed Graphic was resting on the mat just outside the ropes when Matthews stepped back and onto the front bed of the camera, which stuck out five inches from the lens board. As I tugged at the camera, I pulled Matthews' foot along with it. The confused fighter immediately looked down to see why his foot was sliding outside the ropes. Ortiz saw his opportunity. He threw the perfect uppercut.

For the spectators behind me, my body was blocking their view of the mat. All other eyes in the arena were, of course, focused above the fighters'



Ortiz takes a compact left hook from Matthews in the early going of their April 1959 bout. However, the more skillful Ortiz, who would go on to win both the lightweight and junior welterweight titles and be elected to the Hall of Fame, had too many tools for Matthews to handle

waists. Only I could see what was happening. Even Matthews never knew why he lost not only his footing that night, but the bout as well. The punch unleashed by Ortiz caught him square on the chin, and, at that moment, for all intents and purposes, the fight was over. Ortiz continued to connect with a barrage of unanswered powershots, pinning Matthews against the ropes until referee Pete Pantaleo threw his arms around the beaten fighter to call a halt to the bout. Philly boxing scribe Jack Fried, seated next to me but completely unaware of the circumstances, counted 32 clean shots to the head. If Matthews hadn't been the hometown hero, the bout would have been stopped much sooner. The locals were stunned.

To his credit, Matthews never hit the canvas. But not to my credit, I never told anyone why Matthews hadn't gotten off the ropes to turn the tide that night. A few days after the fight, I did try to reach him and his trainer, Quenzell McCall, at the Nonpareil gym in the Kensington section of Philadelphia to explain what had happened, but was told they hadn't been around. At the time, I thought maybe it was best to let the matter drop, hoping Matthews would learn from this experience and develop bet-

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RING UPDATE WITH WILLIAM DETTLOFF

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Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, *The Ring*'s senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

The dangers of boxing: "Long after you and I and everyone we know are long gone, men will still be fighting one another with their fists, and sometimes bad things will happen as a result. You may feel guilty about that fact if you wish. I will not."

Nicolay Valuev: "He's hairier than Robin Williams and facially looks an awful lot like Lurch from *The Addams Family*. In today's heavyweight division, that can get you a good long way."

The lack of a dominant heavyweight: "When a heavyweight champ is dominant, the only fun comes in wondering when someone will cut him down to size and how. We rush a guy to the top of the mountain just for the pleasure of watching him get knocked off."

Dettloff on thering-online.com ... The perfect way to answer the week's opening bell!

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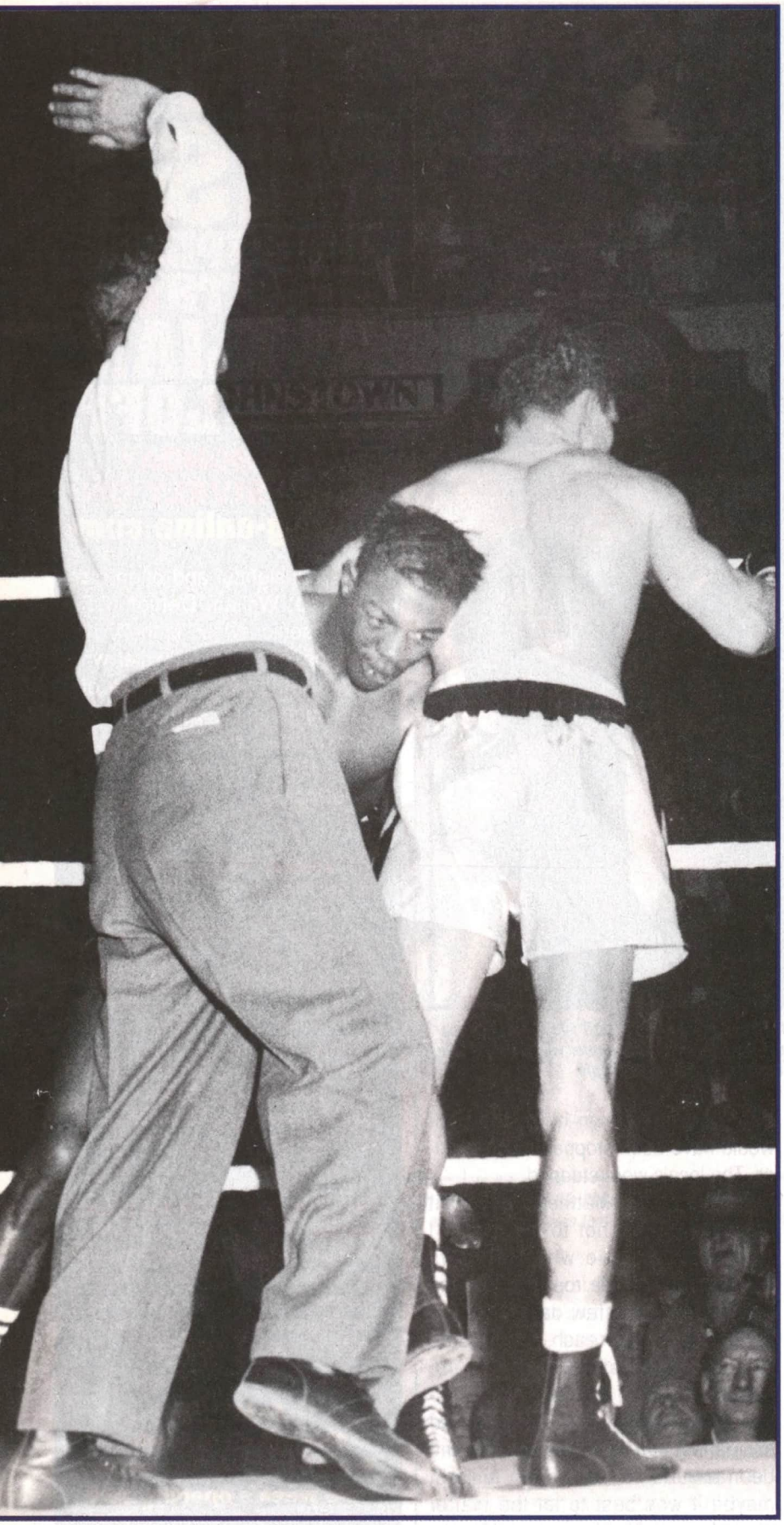

After tripping on Tinney's camera and taking more than 30 unanswered punches from Ortiz, Matthews is saved from further punishment by referee Pete Pantaleo.

ter defensive skills. Who was I kidding? Everyone in the fight game knows that when a fighter takes his first loss, especially a knockout, his psyche also takes a beating. He can so doubt himself that his confidence never returns.

Sugar Ray, who won his first 40 fights before dropping a decision to Jake LaMotta, always tried to avenge his losses. Robinson went on to win five of six bouts with "The Raging Bull, and in his prime, evened the score with just about everyone who had bested him in the past. Matthews, on the other hand, was never the same fighter after his first defeat. Instead of a rematch with Ortiz to bolster his faith in himself, he opted to fight Doug Vaillant, another top contender, and dropped a 10-round decision.

In October 1961, Matthews returned to Philadelphia to dispatch another hometown favorite, Jimmy Soo, in the eighth round after being outfought and behind on everyone's scorecard. I was there that night, too, to photograph the Matthews left hook and finishing straight right, still regarded as one of the best knockouts ever filmed. To quote Fried, once again seated beside me, "the superlative craftsman, Jimmy Soo, was undone by an inferior but heavier-armed opponent" that night. Matthews continued to fight for seven years, compiling a record of 42-10-3 (29). He retired in 1964 after his last loss: a 10-round decision to Chico Veliz.

My belated confession will not change the record books, but I've often wondered whether Matthews would have become a champion had he realized the circumstances of his first defeat. He probably would have felt better about himself knowing his opponent had an accomplice. I can only hope that if we ever meet in that big square circle in the sky, he remembers it's called the "Sweet Science"—or that at least I'm wearing headgear. ■

Jack Tinney was a photographer for the Philadelphia Bulletin for 30 years and currently teaches photography at Delaware County Community College.

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Summary

Heavyweights

Nicolay Valuev W 12 Monte Barrett (*Retains WBA Title*)
Alexander Povetkin KO 5 Ed Mahone
Oleg Platov KO 1 Tamas Borbely
Pedro Carrion KO 3 Peter Szabo
Mike Mollo KO 2 Kevin McBride
Bermane Stiverne KO 2 Charles Brown
Ryosuke Takahashi KO 2 Vitori Natawake
Kevin Johnson W 6 Demetrice King
Chazz Witherspoon KO 3 Earl Ladson

Cruiserweights

Herbie Hide KO 1 Mitch Hicks
Enzo Maccarinelli KO 1 Mark Hobson
Matt Godfrey W 12 Danny Batchelder
Mohamed Azzaoui W 12 Aloryi Mensah
Mauro Ordiales KO 6 Adolfo Obando
Shawn Hawk KO 1 Karl Evans
Darnell Wilson KO 4 Daniel Judah
Nermin Sabanovic KO 7 Anont Donpradith
Anthony McCracken KO 2 Jason Larsen
Yoan Hernandez W 8 Jean Bikoi

Light Heavyweights

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Paul Briggs (*Retains WBA Title*)
Sam Reese W 12 Martin Verdin
Keith Holmes W 10 Corey Cummings
Chris Henry W 10 Rayco Saunders
Sergey Tatevosyan KO 7 Rudy Markussen
Elvir Muriqi W 8 Ted Muller
Marcus Johnson KO 1 James Johnson
Ovill McKenzie KO 2 Peter Haymer

Super Middleweights

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Sakio Bika (*Retains World Title*)
Mikkel Kessler KO 3 Markus Beyer (*Retains WBA Title; Wins WBC Title*)
Allan Green KO 8 Jerson Ravelo
Denis Inkin KO 7 Mario Veit
David Gogiya W 12 Mger Mkrtchian
Peter Manfredo Jr. KO 3 Joe Spina
Dale Westerman KO 9 Sean Connell
Vitali Tsypko KO 2 Stjepan Bozic
Jean Pascal KO 6 Lucas Arias
Anthony Bonsante KO 4 Larry Brothers
Larry Marks W 8 Purcell Miller

Middleweights

Arthur Abraham W 12 Edison Miranda (*Retains IBF Title*)
Sebastian Sylvester W 12 Franck Mezaache
John Duddy W 12 Yory Boy Campas
Joey Gilbert KO 6 Keith Sims
Jimmy Lange KO 10 Thomas Wilt
David Toribio W 8 Ishmail Arvin

Junior Middleweights

Sergei Dzindziruk W 12 Alisultan Nadirbegov
Grady Brewer W 10 Steve Forbes
Christophe Canclaux W 12 Choukri Yentour
Roman Dzuman W 12 Juan Manuel Alaggio
Terrance Cauthen KO 10 Dante Craig
Jamie Moore KO 10 Matthew Macklin
Miguel Angel Gonzalez KO 10 Ulises Duarte
Sebastien Demers W 10 Stephane Desormiers
Jamie Moore KO 10 Matthew Macklin
Cornelius Bundrage KO 7 Norberto Bravo
Roberto Garcia KO 3 Homer Gibbins

Welterweights

Ben Tackie W 10 Esau Herrera
Frederic Klose W 12 Giovanni Parisi
Walter Wright KO 4 Vinroy Barrett
Freddy Curiel W 6 Aaron Torres
Nick Acevedo W 6 Nurhan Suleymanoglu
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 3 Shad Howard
Jakawanglek Saktaewan KO 6 Tsukasa Kashiwagi
Samuel Colomban KO 7 Ty Allen
Tadashi Yuba KO 3 Opeti Tagi
Micah Rivetti KO 2 Paul Thorneycroft
Carlos Vilches KO 2 Walter Saporiti

Junior Welterweights

Juan Lazcano W 10 Manuel Garnica
Gianluca Branco KO 1 Adam Zadworny
Ted Bami W 12 Giuseppe Lauri
Rodolfo Martinez W 10 Ruben Diaz
Chad Brisson W 10 Russell Jones
Dorin Spivey W 8 Roberto Valenzuela
Martin Kristjansen W 8 Geir Jorgensen
Rolando Reyes KO 6 Julian Rodriguez
Takeshi Kato KO 5 Kunpei Shibano
Marcos Maidana KO 1 Jose Montano
Naoki Yamanaka KO 3 Waisale Ratu

Lightweights

Joel Casamayor W 12 Diego Corrales (*Wins World Title*)
Nate Campbell W 12 Matt Zegan
Saddam Kietyongyuth W 12 Arniel Tinampay
JR Sollano KO 1 Hayato Takabayashi
Carlos Gamez KO 6 Jose Nieves
Rolando Reyes KO 6 Julian Rodriguez
Yuki Yoshizawa Tech. Win 8 Akinori Kanai
Simson Butar Butar KO 1 Czar Amonsot
Martin Coggi D 8 Diego Mora

Junior Lightweights

Kevin Kelley W 10 Carlos Hernandez
Rocky Fuentes W 10 Yuki Nasu
Priest Smalls W 8 Pete Frissina
Robert Allanic KO 8 Hiroaki Kusunoki

Featherweights

Chonlatarn Piriyapinyo W 12 Yoddamrong Sithyodthong
Fermin De los Santos W 12 Alberto Garza
Derry Matthews W 12 Stephen Foster
Yodmongkol Singmanasak KO 5 Qi Mo Xiang
Ahmed Elomar KO 6 Ruben Santillanosa
Fernando Lizarraga KO 5 Ernesto Rivera
Jorge Samudio KO 4 Fabrice Benichou
Ramon Maas KO 4 Miguel Garcia
Jorge Samudio KO 4 Fabrice Benichou
Justin Savi KO 3 Terrence Roy

PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS/GETTY IMAGES

Cruiserweight Enzo Maccarinelli slams Mark Hobson with an overhand right

Petchthongkam Sithprakaifah KO 3 Kongsurin Sithsoei
David Sanchez KO 2 Ricardo Barrera
Masao Nakamura KO 1 Hiroshi Aoki
Simson Butar KO 1 Czar Amonsot

Junior Featherweight

Celestino Caballero KO 3 Somsak Sithchatchawal (*Wins WBA Title*)
Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 7 Al Seeger
Gerry Penalosa KO 9 Mauricio Martinez
Antonio Escalante KO 2 Omar Adorno
Daisuke Yamanaka W 10 Shoji Kimura
Cuauhtemoc Vargas KO 7 Sergio Aguila
Emmett Gazzard KO 4 Thongcharoen Suwanasil
Saenghiran Lookbanyai KO 3 Jesar Ancajas
Juan Manuel Lopez KO 3 Jose Alonso

Bantamweights

Irene Pacheco W 12 Leon Moore
Raul Martinez KO 10 Ilido Julio
Jerome Arnould W 10 Jean Codet
Frederic Patrac KO 9 Michael Domingo
Daiki Kameda W 8 Valerio Sanchez
Carlos Valcarcel D 8 Javier Cintron
Pungluang Sor Singyu KO 7 Somsak Sithsaithong

Junior Bantamweights

Jorge Arce KO 4 Masibulele Makepula
Nonito Donaire W 12 Oscar Andrade
Bandung Patavikorngym KO 2 Rick Paciones
Hussein Hussein KO 2 Nouldy Manakane
Nestor Rocha KO 5 Darby Smart

Flyweights

Vic Darchinyan Tech. Win 6 Glenn Donaire (*Retains IBF Title*)
Omar Narvaez W 12 Walberto Ramos
Andrea Sarritzu W 12 Christophe Rodrigues
Hiroyuki Hisataka W 10 Federico Catubay
Luis Lazarte KO 3 Reginaldo Carvalho

Junior Flyweights

Hugo Cazares KO 10 Nelson Dieppa (*Wins World Title*)
Wandee Singwangcha W 12 Munetsugu Kayo
Eric Ortiz W 10 Benjamin Garcia
Nobuaki Masuda W 10 Junji Okami
Kaichon Sor Vorapin W 6 Janrey Verano
Shinnosuke Saito W 6 Masashi Uranishi
Kenichi Horikawa KO 1 Tatsuma Ohora

Strawweights

Ivan Calderon W 12 Jose Luis Varela
Carlos Ponce W 10 Gustavo Rodriguez
Zukisani Kwayiba KO 10 Gabriel Pumar
Julio Garcia KO 3 Ernesto Zepeda
Benjie Sorolla KO 2 Samransak Singmanassak

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Sakio Bika

Manchester, England: "Have no fear of perfection," the surrealist artist, Salvador Dali, once wrote, "you'll never reach it." Tantalizingly close back in March, when he produced a performance that no less than Sugar Ray Leonard described as "a boxing clinic," Calzaghe, 168, Newbridge, Wales, suffered an inevitable comedown inside the very same MEN Arena. He neglected his natural talent and technique to go down in the trenches with Bika, 168, Sydney, Australia, via Douala, Cameroon, and had to overcome a cut around an eye and the crude tactics of a strong, obstinate opponent before successfully defending the WBO super middleweight belt for the 19th time. It was also his first defense of THE RING and IBF 168-pound titles that he won against Lacy.

Bika, 27, may have arrived as a relative unknown, but his only defeat in 23 previous fights came on points against Australia's Sam Soliman, and he and his team described that as a robbery. Nicknamed "The Scorpion" after surviving a scorpion bite when he was 12 years old, he settled in Sydney after boxing in the 2000 Olympics. In his only other major title challenge he was denied a possible victory when an accidental head clash caused a deep cut under the right eye of Markus Beyer in the fourth round and the bout, for the WBC super middle belt, was declared a technical draw.

His physical strength was apparent as Calzaghe waded in wildly from the opening bell, attempting to rough up and discourage the challenger. Calzaghe's kamikaze attack left him vulnerable to counterpunches, and the Australia-based African, 20-2-2 (13), was especially dangerous with his right hand. He stood up to Calzaghe's early rush and held his own on the inside, even catching Calzaghe with a right uppercut as the champion forced his way in, but it was the 34-year-old Welshman who took the opening round.

He took the second and third rounds too, boxing better particularly in round three when he stood off more and utilized his southpaw right jab. But his focus was sporadic. Indiscipline spoiled his display, and his father and trainer, Enzo, found himself talking between rounds to a fighter who was not listening.

There were even the makings of a crisis in round four when another clash of heads—from early on, their heads were coming close together, a consequence of Bika's insistence on following too many left jabs with a blatant cross from his forehead—caused blood to emerge from the corner of Calzaghe's left eye, the first time he had sustained a cut as an amateur or pro. Referee Mickey Vann (England) made no apparent judgment, though a point was deducted from the naturalized Australian's total in the fifth for the same offense. Calzaghe's corner did a good job closing the wound, which would require six stitches later in the night, but Enzo was unable to force him to follow his instructions to box. Calzaghe had made up his own mind on the rough course he would follow.

Frequently, he dropped his hands to leave himself wide open and he took several solid rights and lefts on his chin, which, fortunately for him, is made of strong stuff. Bika's physical strength continued to make him a constant danger and Calzaghe looked especially tired in the ninth round after a good eighth. In the closing three rounds, he was content to hand the initiative to the challenger, who was unable to take advantage when it mattered. Single left leads were Calzaghe's weapons of choice in these rounds. He had very little on his punches but revealed later that his left hand had been damaged during his first sparring session four weeks earlier.

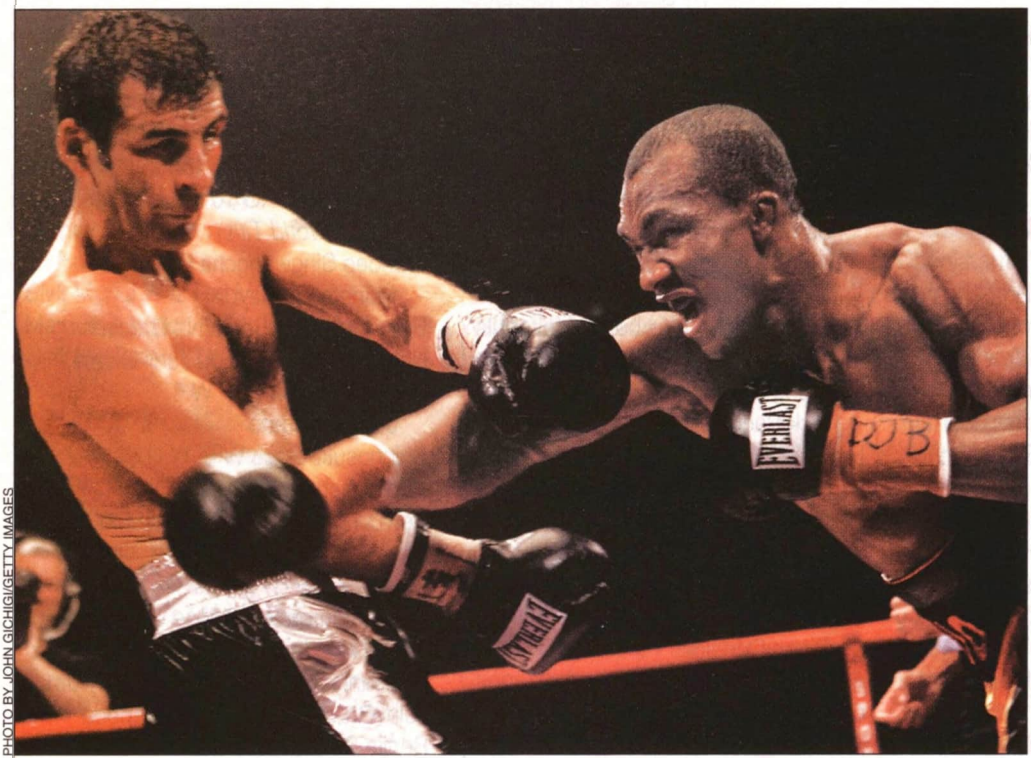

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe eludes Bika's lunging right

Despite the scrappy nature of his performance, however, he was a clear winner against an opponent with the style to make anyone look bad. Jose Rivera (Puerto Rico) and John Lawson (USA) scored 117-110, while Phil Edwards (England) made it 116-111, as did THE RING, all for Calzaghe, 42-0 (31).

"I wasn't able to put on a Lacy-type performance and I'm disappointed about that, but I fought him, a strong, hard opponent who fought dirty, and I came through and won and that's what it's all about," said Calzaghe. "Bernard Hopkins is the fight I want next, but Mikkel Kessler, Jermain Taylor, Winky Wright, any of these fighters would make a big fight for me early next year, and a big fight again is what I want."

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Sports Network**
(10-14-06)
Brian Doogan

Mikkel Kessler KO 3 Markus Beyer

Copenhagen, Denmark: As anticipation for unification bouts goes, this was no Joe Calzaghe-Jeff Lacy. Beyer, 167¾, Bremen, Germany, has been a vulnerable titleholder for some time and, at 35, was ripe for the kind of denouement that Kessler, 168, Flensburg, Germany, via Copenhagen, Denmark, accomplished adroitly in front of a 10,000-strong crowd at the Parken Stadium. The third-round knockout for "The Viking Warrior" was both powerful and predictable, winning for him the WBC super middleweight title. It was also his third defense of the WBA belt that he won from Puerto Rican Manny Siaca in November 2004.

At 27, the unbeaten 6'1" Dane is now the most compelling challenger for Calzaghe, a young, strong, and skillful boxer with the potential to be recognized as one of the finest fighters his country has ever produced. Certainly, there was little prospect of him encountering much resistance from Beyer, whose fluctuating career has seen him win the WBC belt three times, though he has never had the bearing of a titleholder capable of holding on to it for long. "Beyer has a lot of experience and I see this as my toughest fight ever," Kessler said, though it turned out to be almost effortlessly routine.

The long left jab against his 3½ inches shorter foe gave him a decisive advantage, for it meant that Beyer was unable to work his way inside, the price to pay too steep for him to

THE RING Fighter of the Month

Presented by EVERLAST

Mikkel Kessler

Mikkel Kessler can't force legitimate super middleweight champ Joe Calzaghe to fight him. But he can force fans to wonder if Calzaghe is indeed the best 168-pounder in the world. Certainly, after comparing their cross-Europe performances on October 14, you can't blame any fan or expert for thinking that maybe the lesser-known Dane is the scariest fighter in the division.

Their opponents—Sakio Bika for Calzaghe and Markus Beyer for Kessler—had fought to a controversial technical draw earlier this year, making them reasonable measuring sticks for each other. Calzaghe labored to a clear-cut but sloppy points victory over Bika. Kessler vanquished Beyer destructively inside three rounds. Sure, styles make fights and all, but one fighter looked awesome, the other looked ordinary. Calzaghe is champ, without question. But if he wants to reinforce the notion that he's the best at 168 pounds, he has to give Kessler his shot.

For now, Kessler will have to be satisfied with holding two alphabet belts and with being named Fighter of the Month. But based on his performance against Beyer, it seems he's capable of reaching even greater heights.

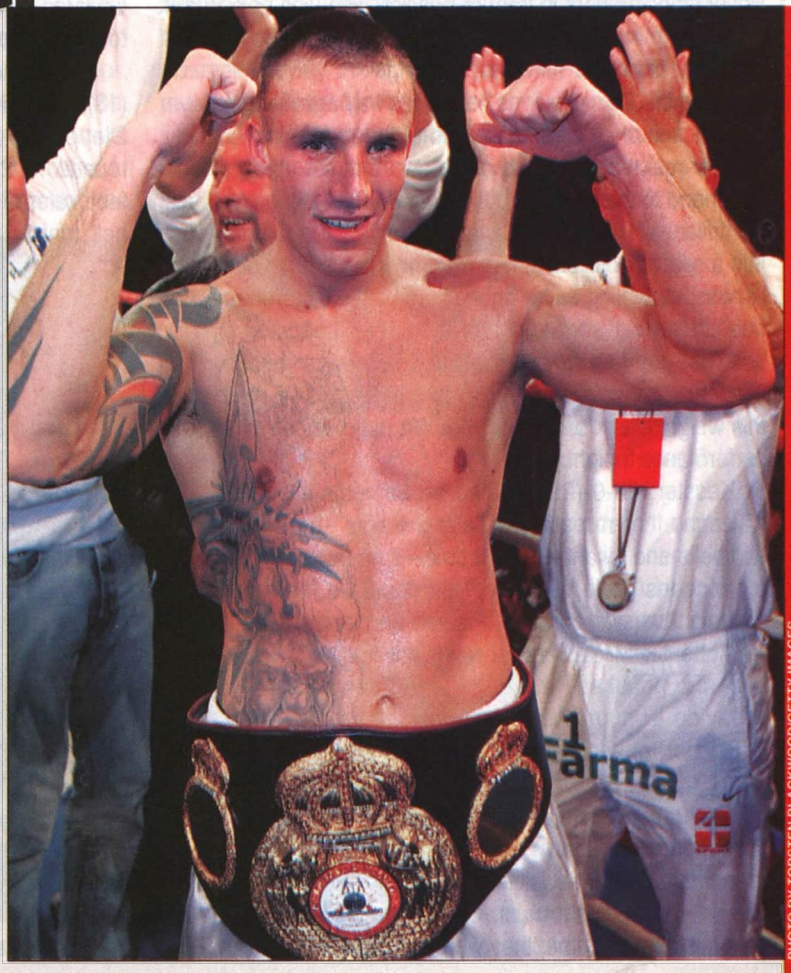

PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY FRIEDEMANN VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler rams a right into Beyer

simply step in. His short counters to the body when Kessler missed the target with his jab or powerful right crosses had negligible effect and he only landed one left hand of any consequence out of his southpaw stance in the opening round. The pattern remained the same throughout the second, Beyer standing right in front of Kessler, who was able to pick him off with impunity. It was difficult to see what Beyer might do to turn the tide.

In the third, Kessler was having his way again when Beyer missed with a jab toward the end of the round. Immediately, Kessler reacted with a jab of his own that set up a powerful right hand to the chin that put Beyer, 34-3-1 (13), on his back. As Italian referee Guido Cavalleri counted, the German rose into a seated position, but showed no inclination to get off the canvas, stumbling as he got back to his feet after the referee had already waved the fight off at the 2:58 mark.

"That guy is a fantastic boxer," said Beyer's trainer, Ulli Wegner. "In my eyes, Kessler has been one of the best in this weight class for a long time. We experienced a fantastic performance tonight."

Kessler, 38-0 (29), issued an immediate challenge to Calzaghe. "I am ready for Calzaghe now," he said. "I have two belts and I want him next time—if he dares." His manager, Mogens Palle, added: "This could be the super middleweight version of Ali vs. Frazier, and let there be no mistake about it, Mikkel Kessler wants this fight."

Promoter: **Bettina Palle**
(10-14-06)

Hugo Cazares KO 10 Nelson Dieppa

Caguas, Puerto Rico: The first time Cazares fought Dieppa, the little-known Mexican upset the Puerto Rican veteran via technical decision and took the WBO light flyweight title. In this rematch, much more than just an alphabet title was at stake; this time, they were fighting for the vacant THE RING 108-pound title, and Cazares again scored the win to stake his claim as the true champion of boxing's second smallest division.

THE RING's junior flyweight title had been vacant since Rosendo Alvarez abandoned the belt to move up in weight in 2004, but an unexpected opportunity to fill it arose when number-one rated Roberto Vasquez jumped up to flyweight, moving Cazares and Dieppa up from numbers two and three, respectively, to numbers one and two. Suddenly, this bout at Coliseo Hector Sola Bezares in Dieppa's hometown took on much more significance.

The switch-hitting Cazares, 108, Los Mochis, Mexico, who was making his fourth defense of the WBO strap, applied intense pressure early. He dropped Dieppa, 108, in round two, and over the next few rounds, rocked him repeatedly and caused the 35-year-old Puerto Rican's face to swell significantly. It was all Cazares, 28, until suddenly, in round eight, Dieppa hurt his foe with a hard right hand. Cazares recovered quickly, however, and quickly went back to putting a beating on Dieppa.

Never one to box carefully behind a jab, Cazares, 24-3-1 (18), plowed his way in and pummeled the tired and hurting Dieppa, 24-3-2 (13) with 1 no-contest, over the next two rounds. At 2:17 of the 10th, with the local fighter still on his feet, referee Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) wisely called a halt, making Cazares the king of the junior flyweight division.

Television: **DirecTV Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Puerto Rico Best Boxing**
(9-30-06)

Celestino Caballero KO 3 Somsak Sithchatchawal

Korat, Thailand: The first alphabet title defense for Somsak, 121, Lampang, Thailand, was to be a birthday celebration for 83-year-old Luang Phor Khoon Parisuttho, one of the most highly revered monks in Thailand. A raucous crowd of approximately 5,000, mostly farmers, turned up at the Ban Rai temple—only to see challenger Caballero spoil the party. Caballero, 122, Colon, Panama, wasted no time in showing he's one of the best in the world at this weight, destroying the WBA super bantamweight titleholder in just three rounds to seize the title. It was a shockingly quick end to a reign that began in March when Somsak won the most action-packed fight of 2006 by stopping Frenchman Mahyar Monshipour in 10 rounds.

The first round started at a measured pace, with both fighters content to circle the ring, flicking jabs and probing for

weaknesses. Caballero pawed with his long jab while the southpaw Somsak bounced around the ring throwing feints and an occasional jab. With 10 seconds left in the round, Caballero snapped out four quick jabs then ripped into the beltholder with a left-right combination to win the round.

Somsak, 29, bolted out in round two, firing his right jab and trying to work his way inside. Caballero, 30, returned fire with his own jab and moved left to right, avoiding the looping punches of Somsak. The defending titlist shuffled in and landed a right that hammered the left eye of Caballero, and the Panamanian quickly moved against the ropes, blinking as the Thai bore in. As Somsak scored with his best punches of the fight, Caballero spun out and the two began trading wildly in the center of the ring. Caballero closed the round strongly with three right crosses in a row, but the round belonged to Somsak.

Both fighters started round three tentatively, looking for openings, until Caballero lunged in with a long right that snapped back the head of Somsak. Seconds later, a right uppercut downed the Thai. He rose quickly, but wavered in the scorching heat. Caballero seized the opportunity, first snapping out a range-finding jab and then unleashing a sizzling one-two combination that put Somsak on the seat of his pants.

Once again he rose quickly and, when asked by referee John Coyle (England) if he was okay, quickly and enthusiastically stated "yes." But the fight was as good as over.

Caballero fired out a quick left-right combination that landed solidly, and the still shaky Somsak stumbled backward against the ropes. In a last ditch effort to snub defeat, Somsak flailed at Caballero, missing with two punches. Caballero powered his way in and landed a flurry of punches. A huge right discombobulated Somsak, and he crumbled to the canvas. The three-knockdown rule was in effect and the fight was waved off at 1:48 of the round. After the bout, Somsak, 46-2-1 (37) with 1 no-contest, was rushed to the hospital with a broken nose.

"I worked very hard for this fight," said Caballero, 25-2 (18). "I knew I was going to get him. I felt my punches were strong and he was feeling them every time I landed." Caballero is set to make his first defense in January, but an opponent has yet to be named.

(10-4-06)
Scott Mallon

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Paul Briggs

Rosemont, Illinois: There's a tendency in boxing for rematches to outstanding fights to disappoint relative to the originals, but the way the styles of Adamek and Briggs mesh apparently won't allow them to disappoint. In a rematch to one of 2005's best fights, the evenly matched light heavyweight contenders went ahead and put on one of 2006's best fights, warring for 12 grueling rounds in the co-feature to Nicolay Valuev vs. Monte Barrett and providing more than enough excitement to make up for the ugly main event. In the end, Adamek repeated his narrow decision victory of 17 months before to retain the WBC 175-pound trinket in his second defense.

Adamek, 174, Bielsko Biala, Poland, had an edge before the opening bell in the form of thousands of screaming and chanting Polish-American fans at Allstate Arena, but Briggs, 175, Sydney, Australia, neutralized that edge by dropping Adamek midway through the round with a sudden left hook, putting the unbeaten beltholder on the ground for the first time in his pro career. Though Adamek got up and fought back well, the clean knockdown put Briggs in front by two points early.

PHOTO BY JONATHAN DANIEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Adamek punishes Briggs with a shot to the head

The more skilled boxer, Adamek, 29, used his jab and his left hooks to the body to control round two, and his edge was emphasized by a small cut in a bad spot over Briggs' left eye. Briggs, 31, did some decent work with single right hands in the third, but Adamek continued to outbox and outwork him overall.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds, however, belonged to Briggs, primarily on the strength of a right hand that just couldn't seem to miss. Adamek's nose was bloodied in the fourth, and he seemed to be

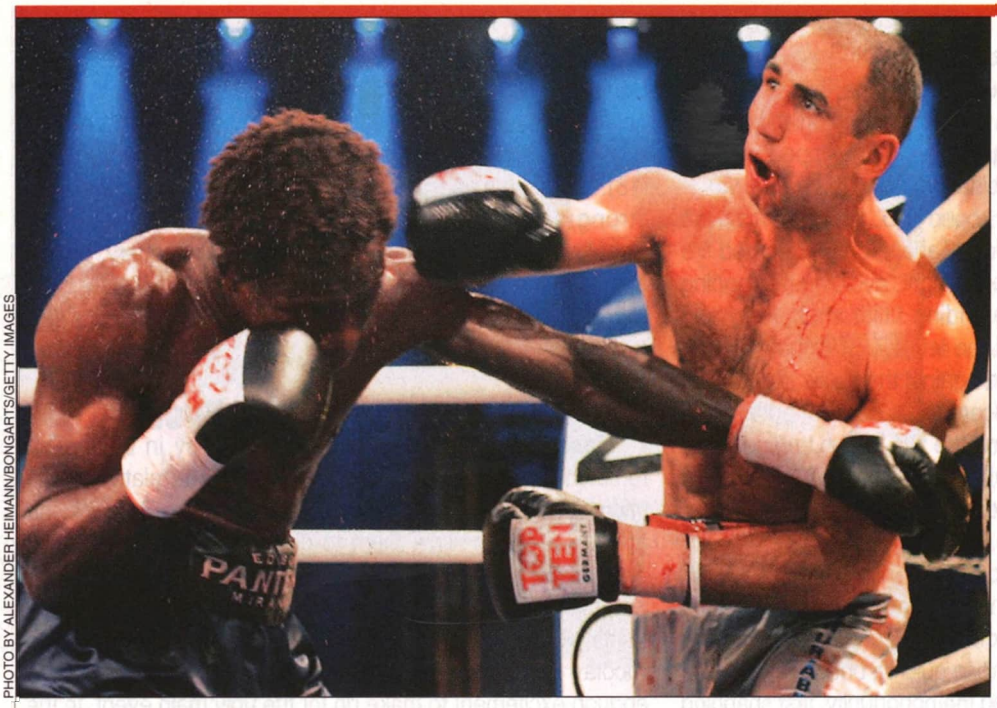

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HEIMANN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Miranda has Abraham in danger against the ropes

having breathing difficulties from that point onward. A big right in the sixth caused the Pole to sag momentarily along the ropes, but the crowd upped its energy level and inspired him to punch back.

Adamek got back to smart boxing in the seventh, and in the thrilling eighth, he threw more than 100 punches and managed to hurt the Aussie with a right hand. The ninth was even more memorable than the eighth, because of both the action and the officiating. A borderline low blow early in the round caused Briggs to collapse to the canvas, prompting a stern warning for Adamek from referee Tim Adams (USA). After a series of sensational exchanges, Adamek strayed low again with a shot to the hip, and Adams took away a point, which seemed harsh and drew plenty of boos from the crowd. Still, with three rounds to go and a knockdown and a point deduction against him, Adamek was clearly in danger of suffering his first loss.

The 10th and 11th were both extremely close rounds, and though Adamek's face was a mess heading into the 12th, it was difficult to say which fighter was winning. But the Pole finished stronger, especially in the last 20 seconds, and it was up to the three American judges to decide if, overall, they preferred Adamek's superior boxing or Briggs' more damaging shots. In terms of guts and heart, they couldn't go wrong with either guy.

Judge Mauro DiFiore had it knotted at 113-113 after 12, but Ken Morita saw it 114-112 and Ray Hawkins had it 115-111, both for Adamek, 31-0 (20). THE RING had Briggs, 25-3 (18), edging it, 114-112.

Television: **HBO**

Promoters: **Don King Productions, Sauerland Events**

(10-7-06)

Arthur Abraham W 12 Edison Miranda

Wetzlar, Germany: Infested with fouls and invested with pure, high drama, this encounter developed into one of the craziest, most desperate, and utterly compelling alphabet title bouts of the year. With his jaw broken and the fight seemingly beaten out of him, Abraham, 159¾, Berlin, Germany, via Yerevan, Armenia, managed to brace himself to carry on for the majority of the fight with an injury that reduced him to spitting blood out of his mouth between every round after the fourth. Still, he somehow retained the IBF middleweight title against Miranda, 159¾, Miami, Florida, via Buenaventura, Colombia. It was Abraham's third defense of the vacant, devalued title he won against Kingsley Ikeke in December 2005.

The bad blood that had brewed between the pair in the build-up—the bout was postponed for several weeks after Abraham became ill, and Miranda ran his mouth in an overbearing way that upset both Abraham and local people—spilled over into the ring. The challenger had points deducted on three separate occasions and ran a serious risk of disqualification from referee Randy Neumann (USA). But the real story was Arthur's broken jaw and the bizarre events of the fifth round. His trainer, Ulli Wegner, was criticized afterward for allowing the unbeaten 26-year-old to continue in such a clearly distressed state, but Abraham was unmoved. "I never would have forgiven my coach for that," he declared. "We're a team and we know each other well. He never would have been allowed to stop the fight."

The bout was a brawl from the opening bell, Miranda, 25, the aggressor but Abraham fighting back with spite and thinly disguised anger. As the bell rang at the end of the second round, they continued to fight on and had to be forcibly separated. Abraham seemed to be gaining the upper hand by round four, but a hard left-right combination to his jaw changed everything, for he emerged with it broken and, increasingly, it appeared that the injury would be fight-ending. But, like Muhammad Ali against Ken Norton all those years ago in California, he refused to yield.

Then came the fifth round. An intentional headbutt by Miranda began the extraordinary chain of events. Referee Neumann immediately broke them up, sent Miranda to a neutral corner, signaled for two points to be taken off his total, and ushered Abraham toward the ringside doctor. Blood poured out of his mouth, and the doctor's opinion was that the bout should be stopped. Meanwhile, Abraham's corner worked furiously on the injury, cleaning the blood from

around his mouth while passionately encouraging him. If it was stopped now, they knew he would lose by technical knockout, since the injury was originally caused by a punch. Twice Neumann asked him if he wanted to continue and his response was ambivalent, but at the third time of asking, now fully aware of the situation, he insisted he would keep fighting. Somehow the fight continued with Abraham's corner barking orders for him to stay away from his rampaging opponent, which was easier said than done.

But Miranda's wildness would prove his undoing. Abraham was clearly a faded force, but the challenger lacked discipline, to the extent that he was penalized a further two points in the seventh for low blows and another point in the 11th for the same infringement. Despite Abraham's injury, it was Miranda who actually needed the knockout to win. Demonstrating incredible bravery and guile, Abraham came through the crisis, even turning the tide entirely in the eighth with a sustained onslaught that brought Miranda, 26-1 (23), to the brink of being stopped. Both men were totally drained by the finish, but Abraham's effort was truly Herculean, earning the respect and praise of the awed crowd inside the Rittal Arena.

Raffaele Argiolas (Italy) scored 114-109, Larry Hazzard (USA) 115-109, and Dave Parris (England) 116-109, all for Abraham. THE RING also scored for Abraham, 114-109. Abraham, 22-0 (17), was immediately taken to the hospital and early reports were that he would be out for some time while his jaw recuperates fully. Had he been too brave for his own good? "When I understood that conceding would mean Miranda winning, it was clear to me that I had to go on," he declared later. "My opponent had behaved undignified in the run-up to the fight. He had affronted me and my crowd in the hall by running his finger over his throat. He could never go home with the belt. During the break my coach told me, 'You're clever, he's not,' and I just had to box clever. He couldn't even beat me with a fractured jaw."

Promoter: **Wilfried Sauerland**

(9-23-06)

Brian Doogan

Vic Darchinyan Tech. Win 6 Glenn Donaire

Las Vegas, Nevada: Darchinyan was making his fifth defense of the IBF flyweight belt, and with each of his past four successful defenses coming by kayo, he was bound to be disappointed by anything less than a knockout victory against Donaire. His disappointment was amplified when he had to settle for a bizarre technical decision at the Mandalay Bay Events Center after having Donaire down once in the fight and perhaps deserving credit for a TKO.

Darchinyan, 112, Sydney, Australia, by way of Armenia, is, without question, one of the hardest punchers in boxing today. The 5'5" southpaw can hit violently with either hand and never shies away from an exchange. Donaire, 111, San Leandro, California, via the Philippines, came out looking to push Darchinyan back in the first round, trying to land his straight rights on his opponent's chin, but Darchinyan, 30, was catching Donaire with crushing left uppercuts to the head every time he threw the shot.

In the fourth round, after three rounds of Darchinyan landing lefts to Donaire's head at will, the challenger started to catch on and began to block the punch. So Darchinyan switched it up and landed a clean right hook to Donaire's head, putting him down. He got up just as the round was ending.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Darchinyan blasts Donaire with a right to the head

Darchinyan, an Olympian in 2000, stepped up the pace in the fifth and connected with his left on Donaire's chin. He was in total control, and his opponent's face was beginning to swell. Donaire, 26, didn't have anywhere near the type of experience Darchinyan had, and by the middle of the fight it was starting to show.

In the sixth, Darchinyan connected with a right hook to Donaire's jaw and then landed three more shots to his head. Donaire immediately turned and walked to his corner. Referee Tony Weeks (USA) approached Donaire to inquire as to what the situation was, and Weeks brought Donaire to the ringside physician. Donaire told them his jaw was broken, and Weeks called off the fight at 1:27 of the round.

Weeks said, "The doctor recommended that the fight be stopped because of his jaw being broke. It appeared to me that the heads came together. The other fighter turned away and complained that he was in pain."

Although it looked like Donaire had just walked away not wanting anymore and should have lost via TKO, the fight went to the scorecards because of Weeks' belief that a clash of heads caused the injury. All three judges, Burt Clements, Ces Perkins, and Glenn Towbridge, scored the bout the same, 60-53 for the titleholder.

"It was actually an elbow in the fourth round that caused my broken jaw," Donaire, 16-3-1 (9), said. "He doesn't hit hard at all. I thought he would, but he didn't."

Darchinyan, 27-0 (22), said, "I broke his jaw with a punch, not a headbutt. I felt his legs shake when I hit him. I am disappointed I didn't knock him out. I wanted a clean knockout. He wasn't an easy fighter to fight. The fight was not interesting to me. I would have knocked him out. I was ready to keep on fighting. I will knock anyone out. Just give me an opponent ... If I knew it was going to be like this I would have knocked him out earlier."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Promotions**
(10-7-06)
Wayne McCullough

Junior Witter W 12 DeMarcus Corley

London, England: Overshadowed by Naseem Hamed in the embryonic days of his career, ostracized in the wake of his dull and dreary defeat by Zab Judah in June 2000, Witter, 138¼, Bradford, England, finally arrived on center stage with a clear, unanimous points decision win over Corley, 139½, Washington D.C., to claim the vacant WBC super lightweight title at Alexandra Palace. The belt had been vacated by Floyd Mayweather before he stepped up to challenge Carlos Baldomir for the world welterweight championship.

Witter has never shown any of Hamed's narcissistic tendencies. He is an honest, down-to-earth practitioner of his trade. There were times during the past six years when he became disillusioned because he was being sidelined. Ricky Hatton, his compatriot and the world champion at junior welterweight, has steadfastly avoided a domestic showdown that would contain all the elements of the Nigel Benn-Chris Eubank-Michael Watson series that captured vast audiences in the 1990s, but recently the 27-year-old Mancunian acknowledged that a showdown with Witter

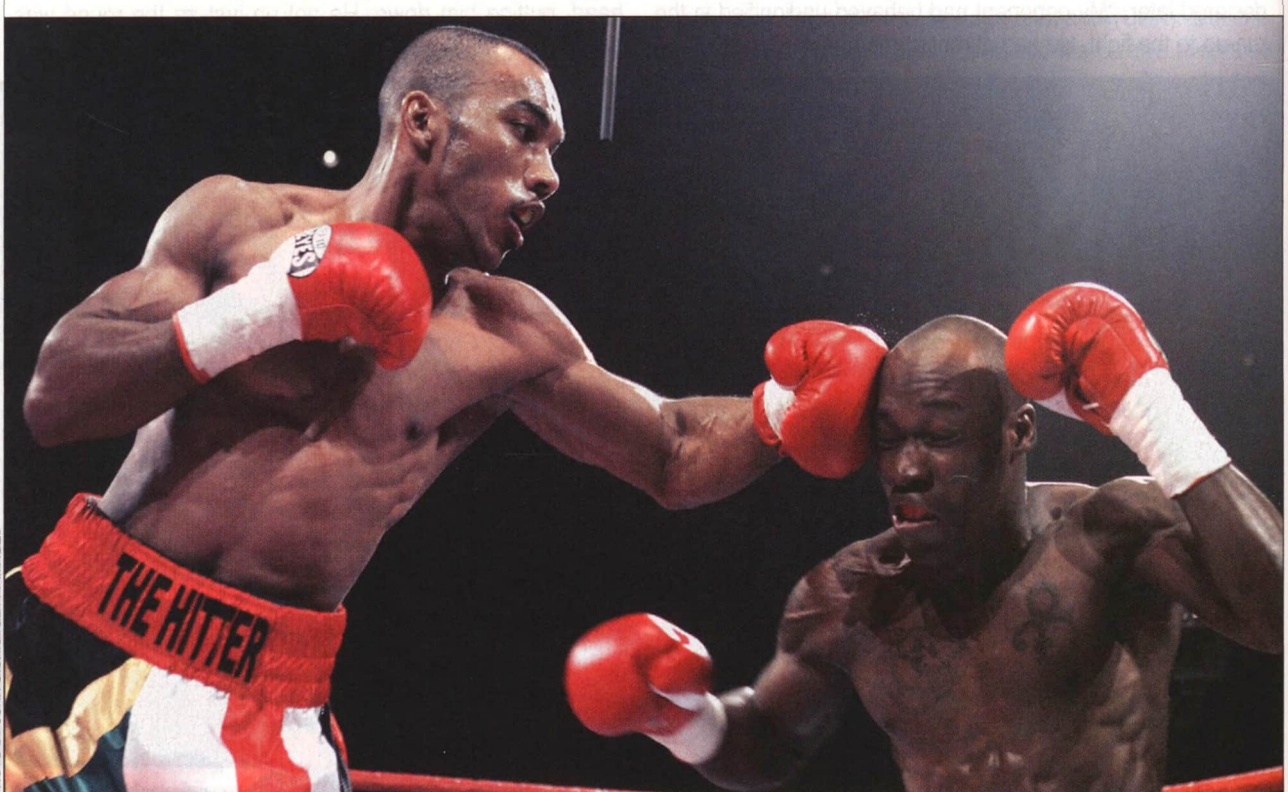

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Witter pounds Corley with a left

could soon be made.

"The fight against Judah taught me so much and people need to see who I am now," Witter said defiantly. "The whole thing about that fight is that it was too early for me. Everyone, even my friends, thought I was going to get murdered. Now I'm more confident about what I do. I'm more powerful and I'm not intimidated anymore."

He showed no sign of intimidation, certainly, against Corley, secure in the knowledge that he had to prevail if there was to be any hope in the future of facing Hatton. He appeared to be in the mood to make up for lost time—having stopped 15 opponents in succession post-Judah, though taken the distance in his previous three coming into the Corley encounter—as he shook Corley with a couple of right hands in the opening round. It was an assertive start. Veteran Corley came back in the second with some accurate punching and, though the fight was never going to develop into a memorable slugfest, there were signs of a compelling tactical battle evolving.

Witter, 32, was showing himself to be the bigger hitter, catching and hurting Corley, also 32, again in the third with his right hand, though the American responded as both fighters picked their punches carefully. It was in the fifth that the most significant action of the fight took place. Corley seemed to be finding his range and beginning to impose himself when Witter fired a terrific right that had his opponent wobbling before a series of shots seemed to propel him to the floor. Italian referee Massimo Barrovecchio inexplicably decided that Corley had slipped, despite clear evidence that he was groggy and in trouble. The momentary respite gave him time to steel himself for Witter's most sustained attack of the night, and the Brit failed to affect a climactic finish as he rained in punches on Corley, who covered up and remained in a shell for the remainder of the bout.

Another resounding round in the sixth, when Witter landed a right hook and solid left that might have put Corley down again, preceded a period of increasingly and vexingly slow rounds. Witter, 34-1-2 (19), was clearly the fighter in control, however, as Corley, 31-5-1 (17), did nothing to try to wrest the initiative from him. Witter simply pecked and boxed his way to the finish, sure that the judges would serve him sweet revenge on everybody who had written him off through his lean years.

Alfred Buqwana (South Africa) scored it 117-111, Bob Logist (Belgium) 118-112, and Gelasio Pérez Huerta (Mexico) 116-113, all for Witter. THE RING scored it 117-111 for Witter, whose victory was as emphatic as the scorecards suggested.

"A lot of people did not have faith in me, even from before I turned pro, but I have proved them all wrong," he said. "I was up against a hell of a fighter with a great chin, but it was just a case of making sure I won. I never felt in any trouble whatsoever." It was also a sweet night for Brendan Ingle, Witter's trainer, having guided yet another fighter to the big stage.

Promoter: **Mick Hennessy**
(9-15-06)
Brian Doogan

Jorge Arce KO 4 Hawk Makepula

Hidalgo, Texas: After roaring up the aisle to the ring on a motorcycle, Arce rode roughshod over Makepula for a merciless fourth-round TKO victory. It was the madcap Mexican's debut as a junior bantamweight, and he delighted the near-sellout crowd of 5,650 fans at the Dodge Arena with a typical let-it-all-hang-out performance.

The 33-year-old Makepula, 114½, came to fight, but was simply overwhelmed by a younger, stronger, harder-hitting opponent. The South African craftsman held his own in the opening round, scoring cleanly with accurate counterpunches. But midway into the second, Arce, 114½, Los Mochis, Mexico, began to sink booming left hooks to the body and land looping rights to the head. Makepula stayed calm and tried to answer back, but lacked the power in his punches to keep the rampaging Arce at bay.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Arce connects with a right on Makepula

It became a rout in the third, as "Travieso" punished Makepula with virtually every punch in his arsenal. The pitiless pounding continued in the fourth, and Makepula finally crumbled to the floor after absorbing yet another vicious barrage. He gamely struggled up inside of American referee Vic Drakulich's count, but looked unsteady and dazed, prompting Drakulich to correctly call a halt at the 1:00 mark.

The victory raised the 27-year-old Arce's record to 45-3-1 (35) and earned him the number-nine position in THE RING's 115-pound ratings. Makepula, meanwhile, fell to 28-4 (18).

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(9-23-06)

Kevin Kelley W 10 Carlos Hernandez

San Antonio, Texas: How's this for a twist of fate? Coming into this 10-rounder at the Municipal Auditorium, everyone was calling for Kelley's retirement, and after the fight was over, it was Hernandez who was bidding farewell to the fight game.

At age 39, Kelley, 132½, Flushing, New York, delivered his best performance in several years, scoring a key knockdown in the fourth round and outboxing the favored 35-year-old Hernandez, 133, West Covina, California, to win a unanimous decision. In his previous bout, ex-featherweight titleholder Kelley had been kayoed by Bobby Pacquiao in the fourth round, looking like a fighter with nothing left. Considering Hernandez' much better result against common opponent Pacquiao in October '05 (a ridiculous split decision loss in a fight Hernandez controlled), many experts labeled this meeting of veterans a mismatch in Hernandez' favor.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Duddy stings Campas with a blistering right

But "The Flushing Flash" was intent on proving otherwise. Looking bigger and stronger than ever before, Kelley wasn't easy for his pressure-fighting opponent to muscle around, and the first three rounds were fairly close. Sometimes Kelley stood still and traded, other times he got on his toes and boxed, and whichever was the case, the older man was competitive.

Still, nobody anticipated what happened in the fourth round, when Hernandez dropped his guard coming out of a clinch and Kelley dropped "Famoso" with a searing southpaw right hook to the chin. Hernandez bounced up just a few seconds into referee Wilfredo Esperon's count, but he was in a daze. For the remainder of the fight, Hernandez wasn't quite himself, struggling to shake off the cobwebs and get his attack going. Hernandez attempted in spots to make a brawl of it, but Kelley moved, counterpunched, and tied his opponent up when he had to. Some of the rounds were close and difficult to score, but it was obvious at the final bell that Kelley had done enough.

The three American judges all agreed with that sentiment. Roy Ovalle had it 97-92, Perry Hillin saw it 96-93, and Glenn Crocker scored the fight 95-94, all for Kelley, 59-7-2 (39).

As he was interviewed in the ring afterward, an emotional Hernandez, 42-7-1 (24), announced his retirement, having been convinced over the previous 40 minutes that his title-contending days are over. Kelley's may be too, but you wouldn't know it based on the way he fought against Hernandez.

Television: **Versus**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(9-28-06)

John Duddy W 12 Yory Boy Campas

New York, New York: The wildly popular Duddy, 160, a native of Derry, Northern Ireland, who fights out of Queens, New York, got much more than he or his management anticipated against the hard-punching Campas, 159½, Navojoa, Mexico, at The Theater at Madison Square Garden. But Duddy showed a willingness to battle through unexpected adversity and came out on top, even if it wasn't in the dominant fashion most observers expected.

As is his custom, the always aggressive 27-year-old Duddy, who was fighting before yet another partisan sellout crowd, came out throwing blistering combinations—but they had little effect on Campas. Although Duddy won the first round, Campas landed three left hooks, including one at the bell that had ringsiders wondering if Duddy had made a mistake taking on the 35-year-old veteran.

In the second round, a Campas right hand produced an angry cut over Duddy's left eye. However, Duddy did not seem

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

Green lands a left on Ravelo

as distracted by the blood as he was by Campas' left hooks to the body and masterful defense on the inside. While Duddy was able to effectively land at a distance, the experienced Campas nullified his aggression whenever he got close to him.

After a brutal three-punch combination by Campas, 88-9 (72), in a ferocious fifth round, Duddy was bleeding from his right eye as well as his left. Even though the fighting Irishman was not deterred in the least, his cutman, "Big" George Mitchell, proved to be invaluable by keeping the cuts under control. Although the extremely well-conditioned Duddy, 18-0 (15), got stronger as the fight wore on, he always seemed vulnerable to Campas' bone-crunching power.

After losing most of the second half of the fight, Campas roared out of his corner in the final round in a desperate effort to salvage a victory. In what could arguably have been a two-point round, Campas won the 12th on all three scorecards. But it ultimately made no difference, as judge Tom Kaczmarek (USA) saw it 117-111, Tom Schreck (USA) had it 116-112, and Billy Costello (USA) came in with a score of 115-113, all for Duddy. THE RING agreed with Schreck's scorecard.

"John showed how much he wants to be a champion," said Duddy's trainer, Harry Keitt. "As far as I'm concerned, he's Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward all rolled into one."

The referee was Hubert Earle (Canada).

Television: **Madison Square Garden Network**
Promoters: **Irish Ropes Boxing, DRL Promotions**
(9-29-06)
Robert Mladinich

Allan Green KO 8 Jerson Ravelo

Providence, Rhode Island: "Sweetness" Green, 167½, Tulsa, Oklahoma, added some more footage to his growing highlight reel when he stopped Ravelo, 165½, Newark, New Jersey, via the Dominican Republic, at the Dunkin Donuts Center. The fight was the co-feature to Peter Manfredo's kayo of hometown rival Joey Spina, and though it was dull in spots, the dynamic ending kept it from being a total bust.

Dominican Republic 2000 Olympian Ravelo got off to a good start, winning the first round by letting Green lead with a heavy jab and then countering. It seemed like a smart strategy, but during the next few rounds, the fight turned into a clinching clinic. Judges Wayne Lima and Stephen Epstein gave Green a sweep of the next six rounds, and Clark Sammartino saw Green winning five out of six. How they determined this isn't clear because the fight was nothing more than an extended clinch. Perhaps Green was favored because his headlocks were tighter.

THE RING had it at three rounds apiece going into the seventh. That's when Green started landing some big shots. Ravelo fought back, but the constant grappling had taken a toll on him. At the end of the seventh, he walked back to his corner on exhausted legs.

Early in the eighth, Green landed a TV-friendly left hook that dropped Ravelo, 17-2 (12). The Dominican beat the count, but a volley of punches drove him through the ropes for a second knockdown. Green ended matters with a straight right that buckled Ravelo's knees, prompting referee Joe Lupino (USA) to stop the fight at the 2:24 mark.

ESPN used to feature a lot of fighters like Green, exciting punchers who boxed, brawled, took their licks, and came back. Now he's something of a rarity, a throwback to ESPN's glory days. He's ready for bigger things, but he was fair in his post-fight assessment.

"I'd give myself a 'C'," said Green, 23-0 (16). "I wasn't doing what my corner wanted." Green also mentioned that he wasn't warmed up and needed a few rounds to make things happen. "I'm taking the rest of the year off. Hopefully, there's a big fight for me next year."

Super middleweights is turning into a good division, and Green's hectic 2006 campaign has earned him a ranking in THE RING'S top 10. With fellow exciting, young Americans Jeff Lacy and Manfredo in the 168-pound mix, we can't wait for 2007.

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoters: **Tournament of Contenders, Jimmy Burchfield's Classic Entertainment & Sports**
(10-14-06)
Don Stradley ■

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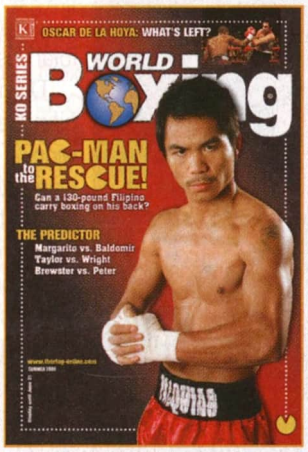

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 24)

His curiosity piqued, Steward eventually discovered that Lee was training out of the Kronk Gym that he had opened in Belfast. Steward connected with Lee via Damian McCann and Tony Dunlop of the Belfast Kronk. It led to a dialogue that continued through the 2004 Olympics, where Lee lost in the quarterfinals on a walkover to Cameroon's Hassan Ndam Njikam.

The popular Limerick native turned down an offer from the Irish Sports Council to stick around for the Beijing Games, opting instead to move to Steward's Detroit home and turn pro.

"It really was a tough decision," said Lee, who comes off as bright and mature. "I was the only Olympian from Ireland in 2004. I felt I had a little bit more to prove and show. But I felt that I tried to win the Olympics and it didn't work out, and there's a new challenge ahead in turning pro, and what better guy to turn pro under than Emanuel Steward?"

Lee recalls running in circles around the living room when he was first told that Steward was interested in speaking with him. It was a dream-come-true for a lifelong fight junkie who grew up reading boxing magazines and idolizing the great fighters Kronk produced.

Lee began immersing himself in the sport at an early age. His uncle Cheasie introduced older brothers Tommy and Mendy to boxing, and Andy and younger brother Roger eventually followed. As a boy, Lee anchored himself in the gym like a ringpost. He'd watch his brothers spar with wide eyes, dreaming of the day that it would be his turn.

"They were my heroes growing up, really," Lee said of Tommy and Mendy. "Every kid wants to be like his older brother. They were all national champions. I just wanted to do what they did." He began training at age eight and had his first bout at 11. "Now, here I am, being

trained by Emanuel Steward," Lee said. "Sometimes I get these pangs of *what the hell am I doing here? I don't belong here.*"

He knows, of course, that's not true. Steward had enough faith in him that he decided to skip four-round bouts altogether. In March of '06, Lee made his pro debut with a six-round shutout of Anthony Cannon at Joe Louis Arena. He posted another six-round shutout in August, when he battered Carl Cockerham in Las Vegas. Cockerham was a veteran of 26 pro fights, while Lee was in his fourth pro bout. "I think I learned a lot in that fight," he said. "It was good just to come through and go the distance with a tough guy and to be pushing him the whole way and have him hurt in the last round."

Lee returned to Vegas a month later for an OLN-televised scrap with Jess Salway. That fight lasted just 1:34, thanks to a Lee uppercut to the body. It was the first time welterweight contender Kermit Cintron, a Kronk stablemate, had seen Lee go downstairs. "He's a really good fighter," Cintron said. "He's slick, overall. You just gotta make sure you don't make mistakes, or he'll make you pay."

Steward predicts Lee will replace another of his fighters, Jermain Taylor, as middleweight champ when Taylor outgrows the division. Lee has all the tools to be a star; he just needs the experience. Steward has helped to fill that gap by putting him into sparring sessions with the likes of Wladimir Klitschko, Taylor, Cintron, and cruiserweight prospect Johnathon Banks.

He's also taken Lee to several gyms around the country and let him sit in on interviews and press conferences. The two pour over fight films of old Kronk fighters such as Gerald McClellan and Michael Moorer.

"He *loves* boxing," Steward said. "He loves to box. He's a really intelligent guy. Devout Catholic. Goes to church every Sunday. If I had to describe him as a person, I would say mature way beyond his years. He's an old soul. I'm talking to somebody about 35 years old when I'm talking to him."

Two years ago, Lee got a large tattoo of a cross inked onto the right side of his abdomen. He doesn't like to go into details about it, other than it's there to serve as a reminder. That faith isn't the only tool Lee took from his upbringing.

His father, Tom, is a tree surgeon. Ann, his mother, used to work in a kitchen. Tommy and Mendy now work in the scrap-metal business. That blue-collar work ethic is evident in Andy, who trains multiple times per day and can be tough to get on the phone.

"My mom and dad, they've worked hard all their lives and they're still working hard," said Lee, who only gets home to Limerick about twice a year. "I worked with them on weekends. When I got to turn professional and box full-time, I took that with me. I took that same effort with me into boxing."

It's followed him across the Atlantic and into gyms such as the Kronk, where Lee takes on more experienced foes such as Bundrage with the coolness of a seasoned pro. It's become a familiar storyline in boxing, the tale of the super-hyped prospect who gets exposed on his way to the top. But with Lee, it seems as if we're only bound to discover that he's *better* than we think.

"I had a big amateur career, and I had an amateur style, so I'm adapting to the pro style," he said. "Hitting harder, sitting down on my shots. Once you have the good technique and the good basics, that's what I had from my amateur days, and Emanuel has just added to that. I'm growing with each fight. For me, it's been a great experience so far.

"If I could have sat down and wrote how I wanted my career to go so far, I couldn't have written it any better. It just keeps getting better and better." ■

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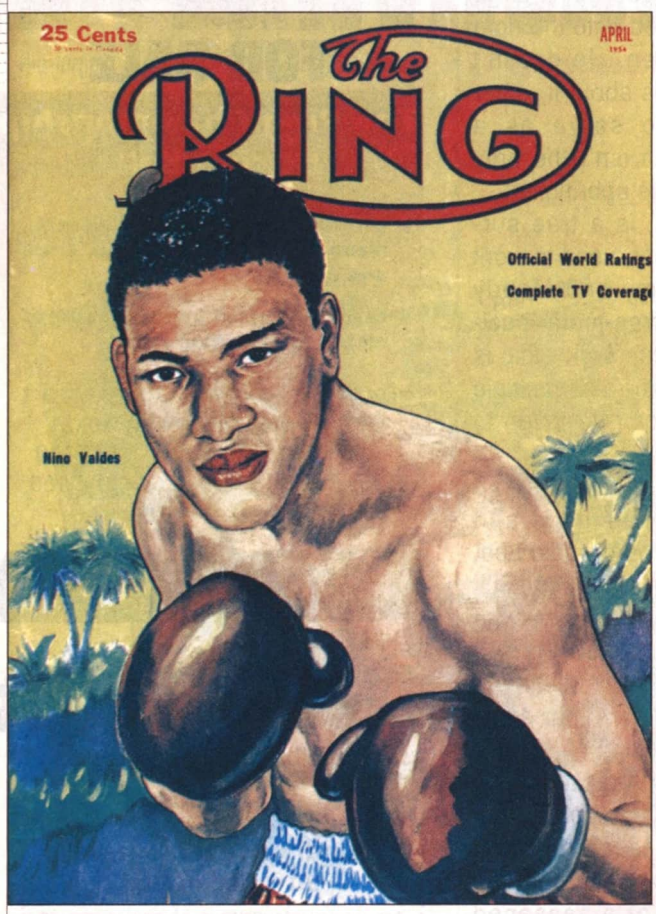


COVER STORY: "Nino Valdes" is the cover subject, but as was often the case in this era, there is no article about him in the issue to accompany the cover illustration by C.R. Schaare. Still, the Cuban heavyweight is listed as the number-one heavyweight contender and pictured accepting THE RING's 1953 Progress of the Year trophy from Nat Fleischer.

World Champions

(For the period ended February 18, 1954)

Heavyweight: Rocky Marciano
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Carl "Bobo" Olson
Welterweight: Kid Gavilan
Lightweight: Jimmy Carter
Featherweight: Sandy Saddler
Bantamweight: Jimmy Carruthers
Flyweight: Yoshiro Shirai

Oddly enough, Valdes began '53 with a trio of decision losses, but bounced back with five wins, including a decision over former heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles and kayo of European champion Heinz Neuhaus to garner the award.

Although he scored some big wins over the next few years, Valdes also suffered significant losses and never got a title shot. He retired after knocking out Brian London in '59, compiling an overall record of 48-19-2 (36). Valdes eventually fell on hard times and ended up working as a bouncer in seedy Times Square strip joints. He died virtually penniless in 2001.

"Johnson First In Line" by Fleischer covers Archie Moore's first defense of the light heavyweight title, a one-sided, 15-round decision over Joey Maxim, the man he'd beaten to capture the 175-pound title. Moore floored Maxim in the eighth and 11th rounds in front of a national TV audience and a live crowd of 16,375 at Miami's Orange Bowl.

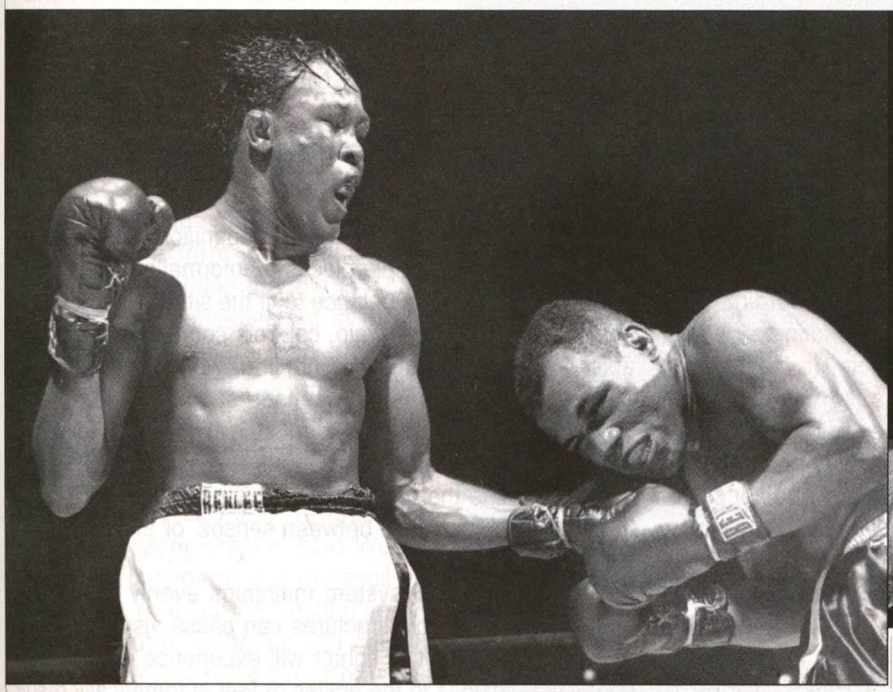
Fleischer urged Moore to defend against number-one contender Harold Johnson, which he did that August, coming from behind to TKO the Philadelphian in the 14th round.

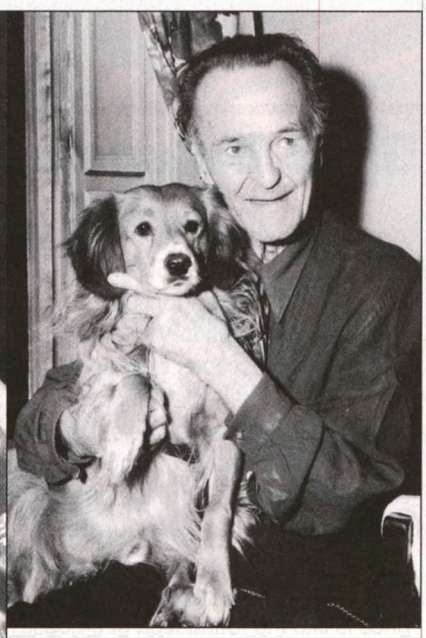
Moore drills Maxim with a left

"The Ring Magazine Set Up Hall Of Fame" by Associate Editor Dan Daniel announces the formation of a Boxing Hall of Fame, which was to be patterned on the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

"The fistic Pantheon will be operated with the assistance of the boxing writers of the world, with stress on the membership of the Boxing Writers Association of America, which Nat Fleischer, editor and publisher of this magazine, is the president," wrote Daniel.

It was also noted that the concept was originally broached in 1925, with the support of Madison Square Garden promoter Tex Rickard. But when Rickard died, the plan was tabled.





Battling Nelson and Taffy, shortly before the ex-champ's Death

"Showboats" by writer/illustrator Ted Carroll is a look at various fighters down through the years who had been "unable to resist adding something extra to the cut-and-dried routine."

Among the fighters detailed was reigning welterweight champion Kid Gavilan, of whom Carroll said, "Although a thespian at heart, Gavilan never lets the fancy stuff take over completely. He usually holds it in check until the pattern of the fight has been set and he is well on the way to victory." Carroll also wisely noted that, "This delirious display is just frosting on the cake. Underneath the colorful coating, Kid Gavilan is a solid fistfighter, smart, rugged, game, quick, and sharp hitting."

Other famous showboats under discussion were Kid Chocolate, Max Baer, Jack Johnson, and Johnny Dundee.

"A Bit About Brooklyn" is the first installment of Jersey Jones' two-part series about the "long, colorful boxing history of Brooklyn and the champions and near-champions developed there." Among those discussed were Jack "The Nonpareil" Dempsey, Jack McAuliffe, Terry McGovern, and Jack Skelly.

The series was prompted by the fact that Brooklyn's Paddy DeMarco was about to challenge lightweight champion Jimmy Carter. DeMarco took the title with a 15-round decision, but Carter regained the 135-pound crown later in the year, stopping DeMarco in the 15th round.

"The Gamest Fighting Man" by Fleischer pays tribute to former lightweight champion Battling Nelson, who had recently died at the age of 72. "He possessed a remarkable ability to absorb punishment," wrote Fleischer, "and it was this punishment that eventually brought about his downfall and, in the last stages of his long life, resulted in committal to an insane asylum ..."

"TV Boxing" by Johnny Salak raves about the 50 million TV viewers that watched the Moore-Maxim bout in Miami and also mentions the first-ever card televised from Montreal, Canada. "It was far from an exciting fight," Salak wrote, "but it proved that Canadian TV has made rapid strides and has placed itself on a par with the American brand."

"In Sunny California" features all the action from the Left Coast as recorded by local correspondent Bill Miller. Of special interest was the main event debut of future heavyweight contender Zora Folley. In only his fifth pro fight, Folley "emerged with flying colors" by scoring a seventh-round TKO of Howard King.

"European Gossip" by Charlie Parish highlights the European campaign of American featherweight Percy Bassett, who kayoed Jacques Herbillon, Francis Bonnardel, and Mohammed Chickaoui in slightly more than a month. All three bouts were held in France.

■ *Bassett as he looked in 1954*

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Good Balance: The Foundation For Success

Good balance is a must for most athletic endeavors, and the Sweet Science is no exception. Imbalance refers to an individual's inability to coordinate or control motor function. A boxer needs to remain on his feet each time he escapes or absorbs a punch. He must regain his composure after a knockdown or a flurry of punishing blows. None of this can be accomplished without good balance. Is this a characteristic you either have or don't? Or, can it be learned? More importantly, is it just another physical attribute that deteriorates with age or too many rounds?

Veteran trainer Thell Torrance believes that good balance is like the foundation of a house.

"A boxer needs it to build upon. Balance is one of the first things you teach," said Torrance. "A fighter must be in the right position to move, react, punch, and defend himself."

Torrance stresses the importance of shadowboxing to improve a fighter's balance. It teaches a boxer how to transfer his weight from leg to leg while maintaining his center of gravity.

"I have my fighters shadowbox over and over, as I make adjustments," he explained. "You teach them to do the right thing, and then have them look at themselves in the mirror so it becomes natural."

Maintaining balance is a function of many areas of the body. The vestibular system is an internal equilibrium center. The vestibular apparatus resembles a gyroscope in each inner ear, and works together with vision and proprioceptors (joint, skin, and muscle receptors), to help the boxer maintain proper balance of his eyes and body during static and dynamic movement.

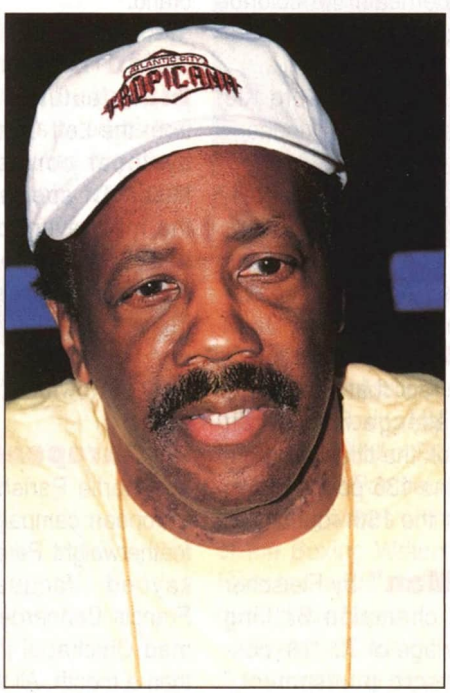
According to Brian Werner, a leading Las Vegas balance therapist, "The two vestibular systems in each ear are like the front-end alignment of your car. When the front end of the car hits a pothole (with the boxer, it is blows to the head), the car wants to drift to one side or another, the tires wear out, and it is difficult to control the car."

Several regions of the brain also play a role in controlling balance. The parietal lobe affects depth perception and enables one to know their position in space. The frontal lobe, involved in cognition, affects one's ability to process multiple pieces of information that aide a fighter in changing his balance to fit the situation. The cerebellum, or back of the brain, controls coordination and the ability to sustain posture or holding, while the brainstem houses the centers for the senses such as hearing and vision. A boxer must have visual stability in order to see a punch coming, avoid it, and move his head and body to continue to see the aggression of his opponent. He needs to switch back and forth between senses, or this can affect weight shifting.

An intact skeletal system maintains evenly distributed posture. Skull or facial fractures can cause visual or hearing loss. As a result, a fighter will experience dizziness or imbalance. Injuries to the ankles or feet automatically result in imbalance and require additional accommodation when a boxer gets hit.

It is believed the force of a professional boxer's fist is equivalent to being hit with a 13-pound bowling ball traveling 20 miles per hour. Therefore, a blow to the head can result in imbalance, fatigue, or visual blurring. The degree to which these symptoms occur can affect the outcome of a fight and the length of time it takes for a fighter to be able to go back in the gym or schedule another bout.

During a fight, a rocked fighter will widen his stance to improve stability. If there is an accumulation of punches, you can see a progression in the width of his stance or deterioration in how he walks back to his corner round after round.



Torrance uses shadowboxing to teach his boxers balance

A recent study published by the Sports Medicine Research Laboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill looked at determining quantitative information on which to base decisions to return an athlete to competition. Typically, many high school, college, and professional teams utilize computerized testing of cognitive functioning. The researchers identified postural stability changes in athletes with acute to mild head injury, and determined that simple tests in assessing balance correlates with persistent symptoms of a concussion. Balance changes should resolve before an

athlete returns to action as these deficits can remain once cognitive issues have been resolved. This type of testing could prove as a way to determine how long a boxer should refrain from sparring or fighting after suffering a knockout.

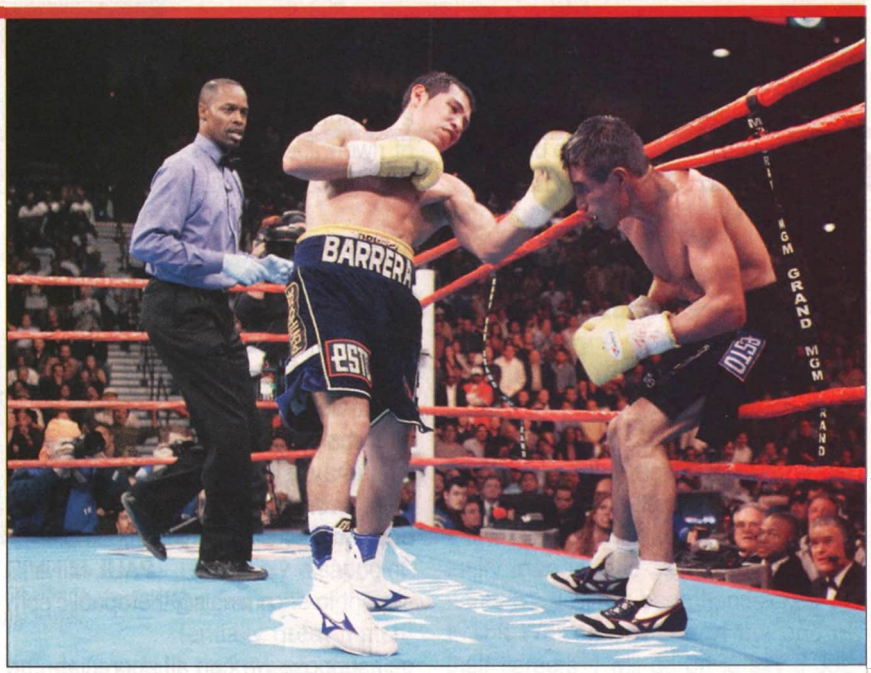
NASA and the military were the first to develop a form of training called vestibular retraining therapy (VRT) for performance enhancement in military fighter pilots, sailors, and the NASA astronauts. Werner is utilizing this type of rehabilitation on boxers.

"When this system is damaged or injured, the boxer may feel a sense of imbalance, dizziness, fatigue, and decreased performance" said Werner. While we cannot go into the skull and physically re-align the vestibular system like that of a car, we can train the brain when there is an imbalance, through the use of VRT."

In dementia pugilistica, or the Punch Drunk Syndrome, fighters often display stiff movements in addition to a wide shuffling gait, originating from portions of the brain that control movements and balance. While conditioning and roadwork will help, it cannot completely compensate for these deficits. Torrance looks to a fighter like Marco Antonio Barrera, who has maintained good balance and reflexes throughout his career.

"He must take care of himself between fights, unlike many other fighters who have had as long a career and rush into fights when injured, not ready, or rarely go to the gym between fights," said Torrance.

He also notes that no matter where a fighter is in his career, once his balance starts to deteriorate, it is time to retire.



PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

Barrera maintains good balance on both offense (above) and defense (below)

A fighter must be aware that many medical conditions, besides those traumatically induced, will affect balance. High blood pressure, diabetes, sinus infections, colds, flu, and dehydration can produce dizziness. Medications, including many over-the-counter drugs, can produce imbalance. Therefore, a fighter should check with a physician before taking anything, as it could impair his performance.

Fighters also need to understand the immediate and long-term effects of alcohol on balance. Even small amounts of alcohol directly affect the vestibular centers. If a fighter already has balance issues, small amounts of alcohol can aggravate his unsteadiness. There are reasons why alcohol is a prohibited substance for a boxer. In the long term, habitual drinking or binge drinking produces loss of neurons (brain cells); atrophy (shrinkage) of the cerebellum and frontal cortex, slows reaction time, interferes with hand-eye coordination and contributes to dehydration.

Acute and chronic imbalance can be career ending for a boxer. Athletes and their trainers need to identify the signs and symptoms early. If the cause is a tough fight or too many punches, then immediate rest and refraining from further punishment is needed. On the other hand, if the fighter demonstrates less and less ability to avoid a punch or an unsteady gait, medical assessment is necessary or the condition may be career threatening or even life threatening. ■

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

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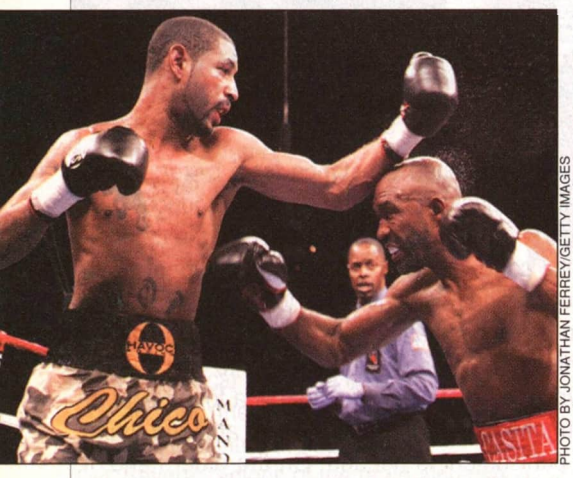

PHOTO BY JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

Although most of those writing in following the Joel Casamayor-Diego Corrales fight approve of our decision to give THE RING's lightweight championship belt to Casamayor, many also expressed concern for Corrales' well-being.

Casamayor-Corrales

I'm happy to hear your magazine recognized Joel Casamayor as lightweight champion. A challenger never should be cheated out of a chance to win a world title based on the stupidity of a champion who can't make weight. Casamayor won despite Diego Corrales' weight advantage. That, in my book, makes Casamayor a champ.

PAUL MINNIS
pminnis@therepublic.com

I suppose we can all appreciate the obvious irony of Diego Corrales losing his WBC title at the scales, but looking beyond that, I think we should all appreciate the madness of a man Corrales' size boiling away his health so that he could defend his championship. I understand that he has also lost his much more meaningful RING title, but in my eyes, and I'm sure in the eyes of most fans, he is no less a champion because he couldn't make weight. It's not a disgrace to the sport to be unable to fight in an unnatural division.

LAWRENCE DONNELLY
pucklptmd@hotmail.com

After witnessing Joel Casamayor's split-decision victory over Diego Corrales on Showtime, I can't help but question weather the wars Corrales has endured are catching up to him. He is only 29 years old, but has fought with such intensity and against such a high level of competition, I worry that he either needs to wrap up his career or campaign at junior welterweight. Hopefully, Corrales can accept this defeat and continue to fight at the higher weight, where he belongs.

JAMES BAULER
discofreshNESS@peoplepc.com

Future Is In Fighters' Hands

Recently, there has been a subtle shift in the power of boxing's promotional interests. Golden Boy Promotions has managed to secure the most exciting, skilled, and attractive fighters under its promotional umbrella (the most recent acquisition being Manny Pacquiao). It makes me happy that fighters are getting together to secure their own financial interests. It was a necessary piece of evolution in the sport.

However, is it really in the best interest of boxing that this happens? Consider recently that professional sports affiliations such as the NBA and the NHL had labor disputes that centered on eradicating unsustainable salaries and unrealistic player demands. Putting the future of boxing in the hands of those who engage in pugilistic endeavors could lead the sport into a very sensitive predicament. With diminishing media attention and the lack of a mainstream star on the horizon, boxing must keep a realistic appreciation of its value.

Boxing is a game strongly influenced by ego and greed. This is all the more reason that we should be cautious that boxers do not overprice themselves in their promotional interests. Let us hope that pride, independence, and the promise of greater financial compensation motivates these fighters to create a greater future for the sport.

SHAWN O'DONNELL
Mission, British Columbia

Bundrage Booster

I believe that Cornelius "K-9" Bundrage has the most upside of all the boxers who competed in the recently concluded *Contender* series. If he can surround himself with good people, he will be able to win many welterweight fights against competitive opposition and rise to the upper echelon of the world rankings. Bundrage is strong, has

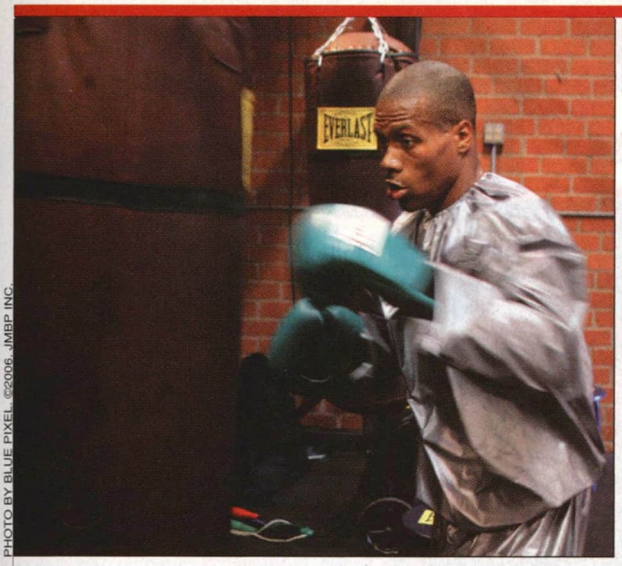

PHOTO BY BLUE PIXEL. ©2006 - IMBP INC.

Cornelius Bundrage showed on **The Contender** *that he has the tools to be a top-notch welterweight, e-mailed Duen Pagon. Bundrage stopped Norberto Bravo for third place in Season 2 of the reality series.*

good speed, and possesses a solid right hand. Although K-9 is a bit raw, some of the chinks can be corrected.

DUEN PAGON
dpagon@worldnet.att.net

Sweet Sight

I'm not sure if Sugar Shane Mosley is "Back On Top," as the cover story of your November 2006 issue suggests, but the cover photo of Mosley was unbelievably great. Can I ask the photographer what type of camera he used and how it was shot?

JOSH BILLINGHAM
Sparta, GA

Editor's note: Well, Josh, it's a far cry from the camera Jack Tinney used to shoot Len Matthews in 1959 (page 68). The portrait was taken by Al Bello of Getty Images with a two-light setup, using a Canon EOS-1DS Mark II Digital, with a 70-200 mm set at f/8 at 1/250 sec.

Shape Up, Ricky

Having seen a recent photo of Ricky Hatton, I was shocked and dismayed to see him in such terrible condition. Is this the same man who beat the great Kostya Tszyu? Surely, as a professional fighter, he must realize he cannot keep shedding so much weight before a fight.

All the great fighters, past and present, never allowed their body weight to be above six pounds more than their fighting weight. Ricky, forget about your so-called pals and let's see you back down to a sensible fighting weight.

J. DAVISON
Derby, England

Missed Opportunity

Although I'm happy to see Jorge Arce take the next step in his career by moving up to junior bantamweight, I'm terribly disappointed that none of the potentially great matchups at flyweight took place. I'm also deeply disappointed in Pongsaklek Wongjonkam for behaving more like a businessman than a fighter, and never working harder to make sure that his mandatory against Arce, the division's lone star, took place. I believe that this has been a golden age for lighter weights, and flyweights in particular, but the divisions have become much less attractive with the Arce's departure.

LAWRENCE DONNELLY
pucklptmd@hotmail.com

We Stand Corrected

In THE RING's November 2006 issue, William Dettloff writes that Sugar Ray Leonard was kayoed by Terry Norris in 1991 ("Leonard-Hearns Revisited: We Still Can't Forget What Happened"). However, I recall that Leonard lost by one-sided decision. Am I right?

BRENT MEJIA
Golden Meadow, LA

You are right, Brent. Norris beat Leonard at Madison Square Garden on February 9, 1991, by scores of 119-103, 120-104, and 116-110.

Not All Brits Love Joe

I watched the recent Joe Calzaghe-Sakio Bika fight with great interest and a few things come to mind: First, he is a lucky man indeed. All of Joe's opponents have either been handpicked by Frank Warren or been at the end of their careers. I will go on to say if Joe had fought a decent super middle, he would have had his backside handed to him on a plate.

Second, Joe is never going to get over the fact that he beat Jeff Lacy. I mean, it's gone to his head! In my honest opinion, Jeff was nothing special.

Third, if Bernard Hopkins does come out of retirement, I reckon he would beat Joe to a bloody pulp.

I will finish by saying if Calzaghe fought someone like Winky Wright and won convincingly, then I would reconsider my opinion of him. Until then, I feel nothing for him.

CARL ANDREW MACKAY
Liverpool, England ■

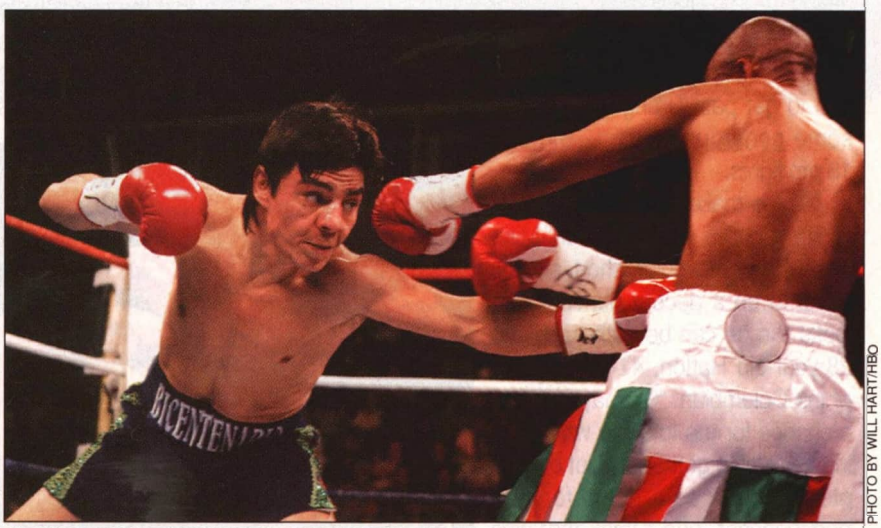

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Jorge Arce's knockout of Masibulele Makepula in September was his first as a junior bantamweight. Reader Lawrence Donnelly laments the fact that Arce didn't get to fight all the best flyweights, particularly Pongsaklek Wongjonkam.

Looking Ahead

By Eric Raskin

Castillo Atop The Hitman's Hit List

It's probably safe to say 2005 Fighter of the Year Ricky Hatton will not repeat that feat at the close of 2006. But the junior welterweight world champion, who fought just once this year, is looking for a much better '07, which will see him fight early, hopefully often, and hopefully against an elite opponent.

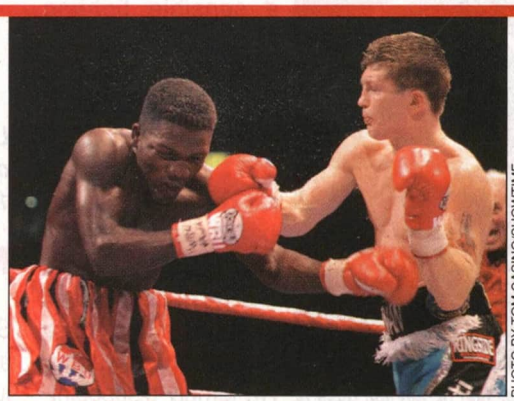

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Hatton will resort to the same boxing skills to try to beat undefeated Urango as he did Tackie in '03

The "early" part is taken care of; "The Hitman" is scheduled to face Juan Urango on January 13 in Atlanta, with HBO televising, to try to reclaim an alphabet belt that was mindlessly stripped from him when he had the gall to fight once in a higher weight division. A fight in January makes a three- or four-fight year very possible, so the "often" part is fairly likely. As for the opportunity to fight an elite opponent, the aim right now is to put Jose Luis Castillo in the co-feature to Hatton-Urango, setting up a phenomenal fight later in the year.

"Castillo's a fantastic fighter, and until his inactivity with not making the weight, he was in most people's top 10 pound-for-pound. To be a great fighter you have to fight great fighters, and that's what he is, and that would be a dream fight for me," Hatton told THE RING. "It has to be entertaining—it can only be one style of fight. He doesn't take a backward step, I don't take a backward step, and back down at 140 pounds, as strong as he is. I don't think anyone would live with that, so I have no problems going toe-to-toe with Jose Luis Castillo."

But first things first; before Hatton can start dreaming of a bodypunching bonanza against the former lightweight king, he has to get past Urango, who is unbeaten—thanks in part to some generous judging—through 18 pro fights.

"Styles make fights, and honestly, he reminds of a little mini-Mike Tyson, very muscular, short, stocky, looks to be a decent puncher, but looks like he can be outboxed," the 28-year-old Hatton, 41-0 (30), said of the Colombian. "So maybe this is a chance for me to show what boxing ability I've got. See, a lot of people know me as a come-forward bodypuncher, and I think that was the right tactics against [Kostya] Tszyu, [Carlos] Maussa, and [Luis] Collazo. But against this guy, I think it might need a different approach really, and I can show him the type of boxing skills that I know I've got, the sort of skills I used against Ben Tackie and Ray Oliveira. Against Collazo in my last fight, I don't feel I performed well. I just don't think that was vintage Ricky Hatton. So it's extra important to perform well for the American audience in my next fight."

Being back at junior welterweight should help. And seeing the carrot that is Jose Luis Castillo dangling in front of his nose won't hurt either.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Rahman is looking to rebound in early-2007 after the Maskaev beating

Listen Up

All we know is a date at this point, but pencil in January 27 for heavyweight beltholder **Nicolay Valuev**'s next fight. Whether it will be another trip to America for the Shaq-sized Russian is unclear ... In other heavyweight news, **Hasim Rahman** will attempt to bounce back from his upset loss to **Oleg Maskaev** by taking on the man Maskaev beat to "earn" his shot at Rahman, **Sinan Samil Sam**, sometime in early-'07. This time around, however, a win over Sam won't make anybody the WBC mandatory, as the winner of **Sam Peter-James Toney** II gets that designation ... There have been quite a few stinkers on the "new and improved" *Boxing After Dark*, but one fight in the works for December 16 is almost stinker-proof: **Edison Miranda** vs. **Willie Gibbs**. The only concern here is that the middleweight slugging match could end up being one-sided in Miranda's favor ... The date has been set for the rematch you've all been clamoring for, **Virgil Hill-Henry Maske** II. Fighting 10 years and four months after their initial encounter (won by Hill via split decision), they'll get it on at the Olympiahalle in Munchen, Germany (the same site as the first fight) on March 31. Both fighters will turn 43 in January ... Speaking of aging former light heavyweight champs, **Roy Jones** is in discussions for a January 20 bout on pay-per-view against **Peter Manfredo**. It's fascinating to observe the power of Father Time and note how what would have been a disgusting mismatch three years ago is now a compelling clash. ■

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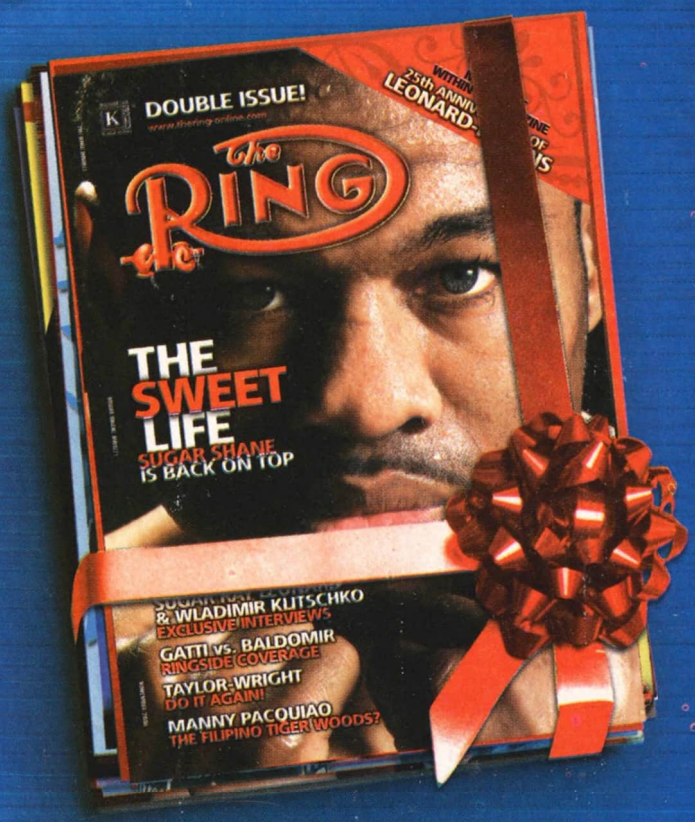

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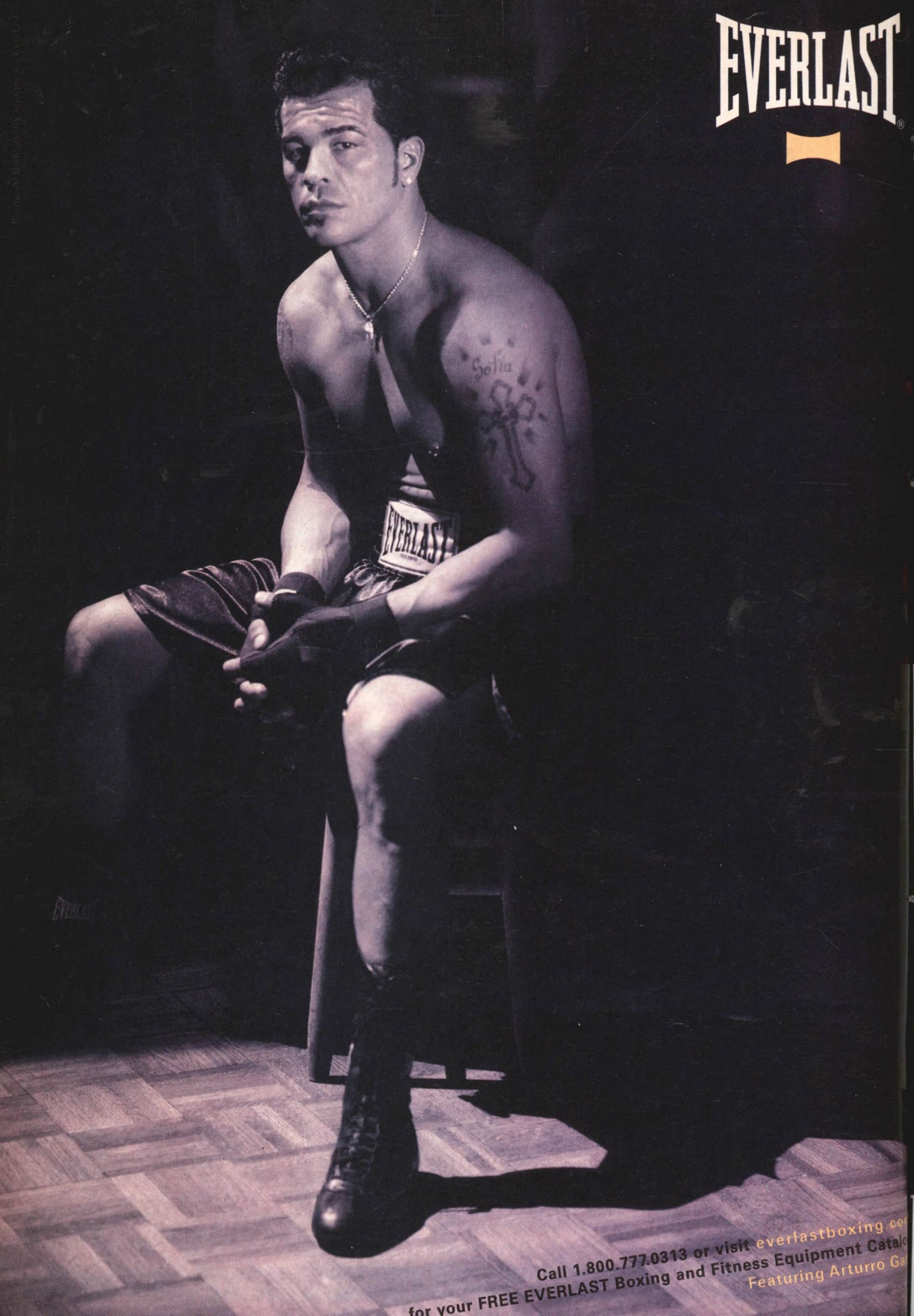
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